

# DN disabilitynow

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## Government plans for benefits 'alarming'

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Government plans to give charities and private companies the power to cut benefits have "set alarm bells ringing" across the disability world.

The Welfare Reform Bill's draft regulations\*, published last month as *DN* went to press, have done little to soothe fears about how the government will protect disabled people as it carries out its reforms.

Paul Treloar, director of policy and services for Disability Alliance (DA), said the regulations "set even more alarm bells ringing" than before.

He said the regulations "play down" the fact that private and voluntary sector organisations will have the power to cut benefits where previously only Jobcentre Plus could do so. And he said the regulations fail to properly address the standard of decision making by those who carry out assessments.

He said: "Unless some atten-

tion is paid to the standard of decision making, it doesn't matter what you do around the edges. They're still going to get things wrong."

Danny Alexander, disability spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, said: "One of the strengths of the voluntary sector is that [disabled] people know they are not mixed up with decision-making. If these are joined up, it could be harder for charities to engage with disabled people."

Mr Alexander also criticised the regulations for not being clear on who would qualify for the new support and work-related benefits.

Jeremy Hunt, disability spokesman for the Conservatives, said that he was aware of many voluntary organisations that have said they don't want to be involved with benefits sanctions.

He added that it was "disgraceful" that the regulations had not been made available



Protesters marched in Manchester against the reforms. See page 13

in accessible formats.

He said: "If you want the feedback of disabled people, you obviously need to make it available [for everybody]."

Simone Aspis, parliamentary officer for the British Council of Disabled People, said: "We don't think the regulations have enough safeguards to protect disabled people. They contain a lot of unknowns – we still have questions."

A Department for Work and Pensions spokesman said any private or voluntary sector organisations that might make sanction decisions would be subject to the same standards as Jobcentre Plus decision makers.

He could not comment on the assessment process, as it was being debated in committee as *DN* went to press.

Meanwhile, a new three-year government initiative, Action

on Stigma, has been launched to improve the way employers handle employees with mental health issues. Just before the regulations were published, the government announced there would be changes to the proposed Personal Capacity Assessment (PCA) to give more consideration to people with mental health conditions.

A taskforce, including RADAR, has found more people with learning difficulties and mental health conditions could work if the government tailored specific programmes for them.

And a Disability Rights Commission (DRC) poll by GfK NOP found two thirds of small and medium businesses surveyed had no procedures in place for managing staff with mental health problems. The DRC said the findings were "a wake-up call" for the government as it tried to get one million Incapacity Benefit claimants back to work.

\*[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)



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## Ryanair comes on board

DN CAMPAIGN



Budget airline Ryanair has agreed to alter small print when buying tickets that prevents disabled passengers from claiming compensation for damaged or lost wheelchairs.

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) had been negotiating with the airline since receiving complaints from passengers earlier this year.

It has been negotiating with several airlines over similar unfair terms since 2003. The OFT said Ryanair was "the last to come on board".

The agreement also covers damage or delay to other mobility and medical equipment and compensation if passengers are not allowed to board a flight they have booked, and for delays or cancellations.

The agreement was welcomed by the Disability Rights

Commission (DRC).

Natalie Salmon, the DRC's head of access to services and transport, said: "It will give disabled people more confidence that if something does go wrong to their equipment they will be compensated, where in the past they have not been."

She said the DRC had received complaints about all the budget airlines. "We are aware that disabled people have reported having their equipment damaged and they had to struggle and fight quite hard to get compensation."

And she said the agreement could reduce damage to equipment, as airlines will have to pay for any damage.

She said: "The one thing that motivates cheap airlines is money."

Neil Betteridge, chair of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, said he

would welcome the agreement if it helped to clarify what disabled people can expect from airlines.

But he said airlines had yet to acknowledge the "disproportionate and adverse" effect on disabled people when their wheelchair was damaged.

New EU laws, which should stop airlines and airports from discriminating against disabled passengers, will come into force in April 2007 and April 2008.

Bob Ross, who won a court case after Ryanair charged him to use a wheelchair, said the new agreement was "a step forward" which would take "some of the worry out of air travel".

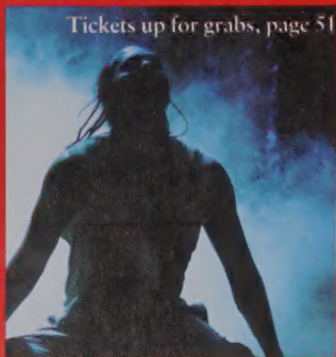
A Ryanair spokeswoman claimed the agreement would not have much impact. "It would surprise me if you could find many cases of [people with] damaged wheelchairs who had not been compensated in the past."

On the cover: Our first ever guest editor, Disability Rights Commission chairman Bert Massie, gets to grips with *DN*. See page 2 for his introduction to this special issue. Photo by Jamie Trounce.



# Contents

Tickets up for grabs, page 51



## News

Top stories	1-9
Health	10
Sport	11
Party Conferences	13-15
News from the year's political conferences	
News focus	16-17
Is the public sector ready for the disability equality duty?	

## Comment

DN columnists & comment	20-21
How to make independent living a reality	
Letters, web watch, backchat	22-23

## Features

Future of equality	24-25
The shape of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights	
Young campaigners	26-27
Have young disabled people become apathetic?	
Influence part 2	28-29
More on DN's influence list	
Breast cancer	30
Disabled cancer patients face workplace discrimination	

Motoring	33
Helen Smith on the future of Mobilise	
EasyKit – Independent Living show	38
Stairlifts	39
John Pring investigates the costs of staying mobile at home	

## Regulars

Arts	36
Books	37
Share your problems	40-41
Information	43
Classified	45-50
Up for grabs	51

It was a great pleasure to be asked to be *DN*'s first guest editor this month.

With all the upheavals within the disability movement as the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) looms on the horizon, I wanted to dedicate this issue to looking to the future.

That is why I wanted to interview the new leader of the commission, Trevor Phillips, about what disabled people can expect from the CEHR at the outset. As I say elsewhere in this issue, it is crucial the new body delivers the best deal for disabled people. They deserve nothing less and I have, like many others, campaigned hard for the CEHR to be well placed to protect the rights of disabled people and move the disability agenda forward more generally.

There are some provocative pieces this month that are bound to stir up debate. Tom Shakespeare writes about how the social model of disability is overdue for an update, in the light of his recent book on the subject. My colleague at the Disability Rights Commission, Agnes Fletcher, discusses whether it's time to drop the label "disabled" as over half of those surveyed in a DRC poll, who have rights under the DDA, do not consider themselves to be disabled. And where do such changes leave young disabled people? I asked *DN* to find out how the movement can encourage them to become campaigners of tomorrow.

We also look at independent living, a hot topic following the announcement of a review by the government's Office for Disability Issues, and there is a news focus on how the disability equality duty should strengthen rights for users of public sector services.

So it's really a snapshot of what is going to be

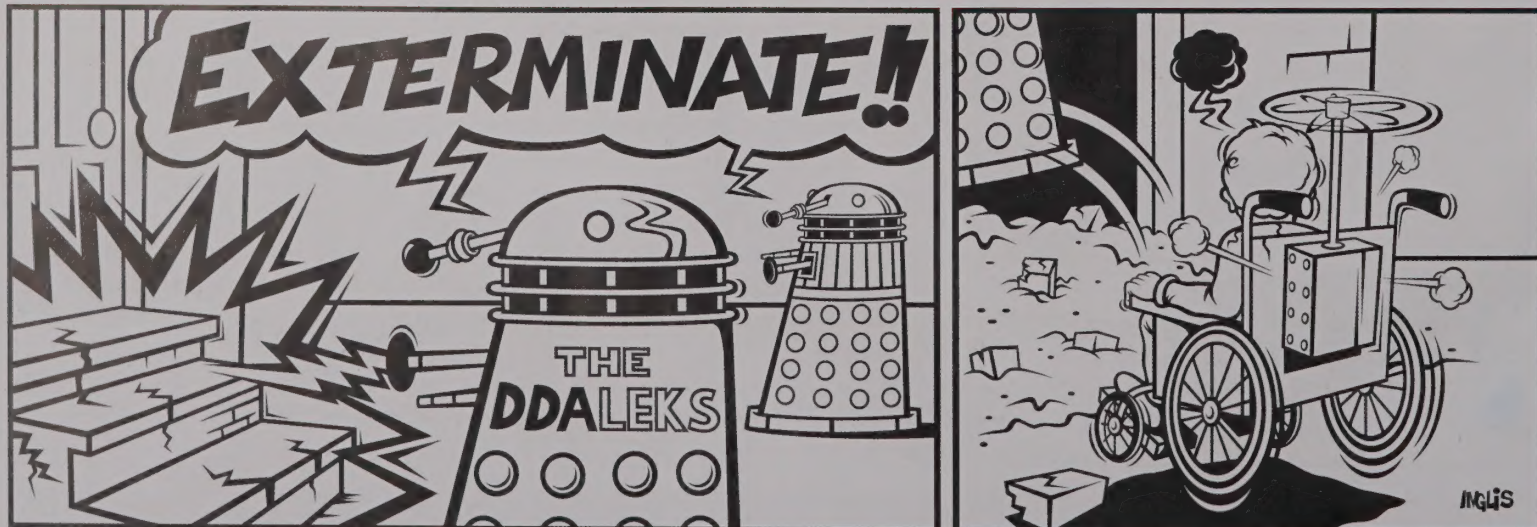


important in the lives of readers in coming years. But I also wanted to focus on one or two important issues that sometimes fall off the radar. For example, there is a thorough investigation into the cost of stairlifts. Prices vary enormously depending upon who you go to and some companies out there are quoting figures in the region of £8,000 for a basic model, which is outrageous.

On a lighter note, I was keen to inject a bit of humour into *DN* – I have often liked issues with cartoons. The *Daleks* strip below was inspired by the idea they would make perfect weapons against service providers dragging their feet over access adjustments. Traditionally, Daleks could not get up stairs – now, according to the latest *Dr Who* series, they can. So maybe a Dalek invasion of earth would have its positive consequences after all!

Finally, I would like to say how important I feel it is that *Disability Now* retains its identity as a truly independent publication that reflects a wide range of views across the disability spectrum. Long may this continue.

Bert Massie, chairman, Disability Rights Commission



DRC LAUNCHES LATEST WEAPON AGAINST DDA NON-COMPLIANCE

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**Hats off:** Lee Kemp struts his stuff as part of a disabled male stripper group, The Crippendales, as they make their debut performance in Yorkshire. A documentary film telling their story, *The Crippendales*, will be screened at two Film Festivals this month.

## Cameron slams job discrimination

Conservative leader David Cameron has underlined the urgency of getting more disabled people into work and simplifying the benefits system.

Speaking at Capability Scotland's 60th birthday celebrations last month, he said 50 per cent of disabled people of working age were unemployed and had been "simply written off" to improve government jobless statistics.

He called for an improved benefits system to stop "trapping people in unemployment, because they don't want to risk their benefits by getting a job".

He said it was "disgraceful" and "unnecessary" that nearly

40 per cent of employers are unwilling to consider disabled people for work, and called for measures to combat discrimination by employers.

Mr Cameron also called for an annual audit across the public sector on the employment of disabled people and said a Conservative government would prioritise the recruitment of disabled people in Whitehall and the public sector.

He said: "If we're going to change attitudes in our country, government needs to set an example."

But he said a less complicated benefits system was also essential.

## 25 years on, BCOBP must fight to survive

The head of the UK's leading organisation of disabled people has warned that it faces a "grim" fight to survive, as members celebrated its 25th anniversary.

The British Council of Disabled People, which represents 140 organisations of disabled people, marked a quarter of a century of campaigning for disability rights at a London hotel last month.

Among speakers were the minister for disabled people, Anne McGuire, the shadow minister for disabled people, Jeremy Hunt, and one of BCOBP's first chairs, Dame Jane Campbell.

But afterwards, current chair Anne Pridmore criticised the government for making repeated requests for help with consultations while turning down three applications for core funding.

She said: "It is a grim situation but we are not alone in this. It will be their loss if BCOBP did go down."

# Charity contract battle slammed

EXCLUSIVE BY JOHN PRING

A leading social care figure has delivered a stinging rebuke to charities that compete for contracts against smaller organisations run by disabled people.

Bill Kilgallon, chief executive of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), told *DN* it was "really worrying" that user-led organisations were losing out on contracts to non user-led charities.

His comments follow a series of reports in *DN* about funding problems faced by centres for independent living (CILs) that have lost out on contracts to provide services, such as those for direct payments support.

Speaking in a personal capacity, after a fringe event at

the Conservative Party conference, Mr Kilgallon said: "I spent years running a voluntary organisation before SCIE."

"As an individual, I could not in conscience compete against a service user-led organisation. I think every voluntary organisation should ask themselves why they would."

His comments were backed by Dame Jane Campbell, a leading figure in the independent living movement, who said big service providing charities could undercut user-led groups such as local CILs.

She said: "If I was running a voluntary organisation, I would not compete against a CIL."

Ian Loynes, director of Southampton Centre for Independent Living (SCIL),

said SCIL recently lost a third of its direct payments work to the charity Enham.

Mike Smith, chief executive of Enham, said: "Enham is very much equipped to deliver such services as are many other providers who are both organisations "for" and "of" disabled people. Preventing other providers from bidding is not the way to provide more choice, value and flexibility in the services that are delivered."

Catherine A'Bear, chief officer for corporate affairs for Shaw Trust, said: "We do not believe that certain organisations should have a special position in the market place just because of the type of organisation they are."

## Compulsory insurance for scooters welcomed

Mobility charities have welcomed proposals for users of motorised wheelchairs and scooters to obtain compulsory third party insurance.

The report\*, commissioned by the Department for Transport (DfT) and carried out by consultancy Transport and Travel Research, found there were an estimated 90,000 powered wheelchair and scooter users in the UK, with the number rising.

It recommended that compulsory insurance should apply to motorised wheelchairs and scooters used on pavements at speeds up to 6.4kph and on roads at up to 12.8kph.

Douglas Campbell, chairman of Mobilise, said it was a sensible recommendation. "You don't need to be in a car to face a million pound compensation claim." Ian Legrand, of children's mobility charity Whizz-kidz, added: "If you dent a car or you hit someone then the costs could be astronomical."

Bob Ross, helpline manager at the Disabled Living Foundation, said the price of insurance, about £50 per year, was worth it for peace of mind. RADAR said most motorised mobility users had insurance.

The report said incidents involved powered wheelchairs

and scooters were infrequent, but probably heavily under-reported, with one incident in a major shopping centre for each 15 million visitors.

Police statistics varied, from one injury per year for each 88 mobility vehicle users in Nottinghamshire to one in 617 in West Yorkshire.

The DfT said a consultation will probably start next year.

\**The Review of Class 2 and Class 3 Powered Wheelchairs and Scooters*, tel: 0870 1226 236 or visit: [www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_mobility/documents/page/dft\\_mobility\\_611262.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_mobility/documents/page/dft_mobility_611262.pdf)

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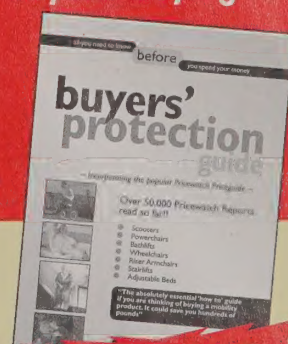
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# Response to SEN report 'disappointing'

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

The government has won mixed reviews for its response to a report on special educational needs (SEN) by an influential committee of MPs.

The response outlined plans for more training for SEN co-ordinators within schools, guidance for local authorities on SEN provision and the need for more independence for officers who provide SEN support to parents.

But Barry Sheerman MP, chairman of the education and

skills committee, said he was "extremely disappointed" that the government failed to properly address issues within the committee's report, published in July.

Mr Sheerman said the government ignored a recommendation to alter the statementing process so that councils were no longer responsible for both assessing and funding needs.

A DfES spokesman said the government stood by its response, in which education secretary Alan Johnson said it was not the right time to replace the statementing system.

Tara Flood, director of the Alliance for Inclusive Education, said she was "disappointed but not surprised" about the government's call for a "range of provision", including special schools, which she felt was not in line with its inclusion policy.

But she welcomed the announcement of additional staff training and more independence for parent partnership officers.

A parliamentary debate was due to be held after DN went to press.

## New plan for further education

A new plan aims to improve further education (FE) for people with learning difficulties.

In a report\* published last month, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) said it would stop funding courses where learners were not deemed to be making progress.

On top of the current budget of £1.5billion for people with learning difficulties, LSC will invest an additional £35million to help with changes such as staff training and improving course quality.

Melanie Hunt, LSC's national director of learning, said "partnership working" between government departments would ensure there were alternatives for people no longer progressing in FE.

She said LSC had made it "very clear" to FE colleges that provision for people with learning difficulties was a priority.

Peter Lavender, deputy director of the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education, said he supported the idea of cutting poor quality courses, as long as it was "sensitive to all learners" and took "proper account of context and aspiration".

He said the strategy would help stop cuts to quality provision around the country.

\**Learning for Living and Work*; for a copy, tel: 0870 900 6800 or visit [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

## Design charity pleads for funds

The UK's only inclusive design charity could be forced to close because of a financial crisis.

The Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) needs £50,000 to secure its short-term survival and has asked its 450-odd members to try to donate £100 each. The organisation registered a deficit of more than £40,000 in the first quarter of this year after a sudden drop in demand for its training courses.

CAE chief executive Sarah Langton-Lockton said organisations may have "lost their sense of urgency" about the need for training because of the lack of Disability Discrimination Act case law. She added that CAE would change its courses in an effort to boost demand.

The organisation is also restructuring and making cut-backs to ensure survival.



Royal key: 7 July bombing victim Gill Hicks (centre) was one of six people to receive the keys to a new car from HRH Princess Alexandra (right) and Lord Sterling, co-founding chairman of Motability. The presentation, held at Buckingham Palace last month, marked the two millionth car provided to a disabled person through the Motability scheme over its 28 years.

## In brief

### Call for complex coverage

Tony Blair's former press secretary Alastair Campbell called for the media to highlight the "complexity" of mental health issues rather than trivializing them.

Speaking at the Mental Health Media Awards, he said people with mental health problems only tended to appear in the media if they were violent.

Mr Campbell, who has had mental health issues himself, accused the media of ignoring complex issues.

### Services 'generally' ok

A national review of community mental health services found that out-of-hours crisis care, talking therapies and information services need to improve.

But the review by the Healthcare Commission (HC) found most services were performing well.

Long-term problems include the management of medicine, with 89 per cent of services not adequately recording side effects or how patients respond to drugs.

HC said the results showed more people using mental health services felt they were treated with dignity but there were areas which needed improvement.

### No to Alzheimer's appeal

People in the early and later stages of Alzheimer's will be denied access to three drugs on the NHS after the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) rejected an appeal from campaigners.

NICE said it will recommend that the NHS only considers donepezil, galantamine and rivastigmine as treatments for people with moderate Alzheimer's. A fourth drug, memantine, will only be available in clinical studies.

The Alzheimer's Society said the "blatant cost cutting" would "rob people of priceless time early in the disease".

### Info by prescription

People with long-term conditions will be given prescriptions of information as well as medicine, under a new government initiative aimed at helping them take control of their condition.

Patients will be given a list of resources such as websites and support groups.

Health minister Rosie Winteron launched a series of pilots to trial the idea, which will initially focus on cancer and mental health.

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# New cuts renew anger

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Plans to slash funding for people with learning difficulties in Cardiff by more than a third has sparked renewed outrage over cuts to services for disabled people.

Cardiff Council is set to approve a 36 per cent funding cut for services for people with learning difficulties, to be implemented over the next three years.

A Learning Disability Wales spokeswoman said if there was less money for support workers it would mean disabled people would not have the same housing options, access to leisure activities or general life choices.

She added: "It can't fail to impact massively on their lives."

A Cardiff Council

spokesman said: "We do not intend to reduce services for service users, we simply intend to pay less for them."

Meanwhile, the What About Me (WAM) campaign, which includes parents and carers of disabled children, held a protest last month to demand better services from Wakefield Metropolitan Council.

Tim McSharry, head of disability and diversity for the Access Committee for Leeds, said the council should provide more respite care and support for out of school activities.

He said: "[The council] cannot hide behind the fact that there is no funding. Disabled children are being discriminated against because of criteria and false hurdles."

A council spokeswoman said it would be "happy" to talk with parents or carers about services.

The Direct Payment Users Network in Essex is also gearing up for a fight on changes to care charge thresholds and cut-backs to hours of care.

Two disabled men in Lincolnshire carried out a 24-hour demonstration outside Lincolnshire County Council offices to protest over possible increases to home care charges.

And Anne Pridmore, chair of the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP), told DN that more than ten user-led member organisations raised concerns about funding problems at BCODP's 25th birthday celebration last month.

## Commission 'powerless to act' on abuse allegations

The government's social care watchdog has defended a sister organisation accused of "mind-boggling failings" over its handling of abuse allegations at a hospital for people with learning difficulties.

The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) claims it is powerless to act, even though DN put it in touch with the whistleblower who alleged "shocking" conditions at Fieldhead Hospital in Wakefield.

There has still been no thorough, independent investigation of the abuse alleged to have taken place at Fieldhead between 2001 and 2003.

The Healthcare Commission (HC) was accused of "astonishing complacency" after "reviewing" the allegations two years ago.

Now CSCI, which is due to merge with HC by April 2008, has also failed to investigate the claims, despite interviewing the whistleblower.

A CSCI spokesman said he believed HC's review had been "thorough" but could not explain why CSCI approved of what campaigners called the HC's "mind-boggling" failings.

The whistleblower told DN: "It just shows what everyone thinks of people with learning difficulties. They don't think they deserve a thorough investigation. It is absolutely disgusting."



Plan of attack: Ahmed (front) and (back, left to right) Issac, Stacey and Sophie, were among the young disabled people at the launch of Birmingham City Council's two-year integrated disability strategy last month. The strategy aims to co-ordinate services and better meet the needs of disabled children, young people, their families and carers.

## Woman 'incarcerated' in flat

An older disabled woman has been "incarcerated" in her first floor flat during eleven weeks of renovations on the only lift in her building.

Gertrude Tausinger, 94, a wheelchair-user, has been forced to pay an extra £360 every week for Red Cross to remove her from the building in a safety chair.

The board that runs Cranmer Court, in north London, admits it has made no reasonable adjustments for disabled residents and has offered no alternative accommodation.

The chairman of the managing board, Stanley Coorsch, told DN that it was each resident's responsibility to make arrangements to

leave during building works.

But Peter Geiger, Mrs Tausinger's son, said it was "scandalous" and that he was considering legal action.

Penny Gostyn, director of Defries & Associates, the managing agents for the property, said a "thorough consultation" had been carried out, but she could not recall whether residents had been asked about specific access requirements.

She said: "People have to take responsibility for making their voice heard. We are not mind readers."

A Disability Rights Commission spokesman said the board's actions were "contrary to the spirit and the letter" of the Disability Discrimination Act.

## No jobs for ten years

Almost half of unemployed visually impaired people of working age have not had a job for more than a decade, according to new research.

The Network 1000 report, by umbrella charity Vision 2020 UK, surveyed more than 1,000 blind or visually impaired individuals. It found only a third of people of working age described themselves as employed, self-

employed, or employed and a student. And of the people who said they were unemployed, 42 per cent had not been employed for ten years or more.

Stephen Remington, of Action for Blind People, said: "We have to move away from the assumption...that visual impairment stops people working. With the right help and support this is simply untrue."

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## Obituary: Sir John Cox



Vice-Admiral Sir John Cox KCB, who died in October aged 77, was a bluff sailor with a boyish sense of humour and an unexpected empathy with disabled people.

When, as a young lieutenant, he first encountered severely disabled children, he said: "I found I couldn't take it."

He asked for time off "to talk to myself", and came to recognise that disabled people might be different, but no more so than people and ways on different ships.

He became chief executive of the Spastics Society in 1984 after a distinguished naval career, commanding ships, including a guided missile destroyer, holding senior staff posts and taking responsibility for the fighting efficiency and training of the Royal Navy's carriers and

amphibious forces.

Bad luck prevented him commanding the Falklands War task force.

At the Spastics Society, he involved disabled people in his efforts to modernise the charity, tried unsuccessfully to get rid of the word "spastic", and allowed *Spastics News* to become the pan-impairment *Disability Now*, with a mandate for editorial freedom.

Disagreements with the trustees forced him out in 1988, but he was remembered affectionately for his humour and a caring management style that involved walking his decks and talking to staff.

In 2004 he met Tony Manwaring and hearing he was chief executive said jovially, "You poor bugger."

Mary Wilkinson, editor, *Disability Now*, 1984-2005

## Taking control of social care

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Over half of England's 150 local authorities have moved towards giving disabled people more control over their social care, according to new research.

The report\* examines the first two years of a pilot scheme testing "self-directed support" for people with learning difficulties in six local authorities – Essex, Gateshead, Redcar and Cleveland, South Gloucestershire, West Sussex and Wigan.

The in Control scheme gave people more control over money for their care and support with decision-making.

The report shows that the number of people satisfied with the level of control they had over their lives increased from 42 per cent to 97 per cent after the pilot was completed. Participants made key changes in where they lived, who they lived with, what they did with their time and who supported them.

The in Control partnership between central and local government and voluntary organisations including Mencap has



Under control: (from left) Jo Williams, chief executive of Mencap, Clive Sneddon, whose story is featured in the report, and Lord Rix, Mencap president, at the launch

been so successful that 85 local authorities are now members and using self-directed support across their social care system.

Simon Duffy, national director of in Control, said he was hopeful that personalised budgets, which are a core part of the scheme, will be delivered to every disabled person by 2012.

Mr Duffy said: "When people are in control of the planning, they prioritise what they need help with and how they want to get that help.

"As a result, people are com-

ing up with much more holistic, intelligent solutions for their care."

Ivan Lewis, minister for social care, told the launch that the ethos behind in Control was the direction in which "modern social care" should be heading.

Mr Lewis said it would not cost more money than the current social care system, but the challenge would be convincing the "cynics and sceptics".

\*in Control 2003-2005; for a copy, tel: 0121 708 3031 or visit: [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

## 'No evidence' that councils are using new blue badge powers

Disabled motoring charities fear local authorities are not taking advantage of new powers to combat blue badge (BB) abuse.

Neither Mobilise nor The Blue Badge Network (BBN) have heard any evidence from members that local authorities are using the powers that came into effect on 29 September.

Police officers, traffic wardens, local authority parking attendants and civil enforcement officers can now inspect a BB, to check if it is stolen, forged or not being used by its rightful owner.

The powers were recommended by the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee in 2002.

Douglas Campbell, chair of

Mobilise, said: "I have seen no evidence that it has had any impact at all. I think that probably reflects that local authorities probably do not give this a very high priority.

"Local authorities really must use these powers to make sure that disabled people are able to park where they need to go.

"If they are not doing so, disabled people need to get on to their local authorities and their elected councillors and find out why this is not happening."

Mary Grace, chairman of BBN, added: "It is a golden opportunity to tighten up on abuse. Now they have got to have the will to do it."

## Small business 'ignorant' on access

Only two fifths of small businesses in London have made reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled people under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), according to new research.

The survey of 100 small business owners – conducted by Business Link for London – also showed two fifths were unfamiliar with the DDA and how it impacted on their business.

And it found that 70 per cent of respondents had never conducted an access audit of their premises. Yet 61 per cent believed their business to be "disability compliant".

A Disability Rights Commission spokeswoman said the research showed "ignorance and anxiety" but also contained positive messages.

For example, of the 40 per cent who had made adjustments, 63 per cent said it had been less difficult than anticipated.

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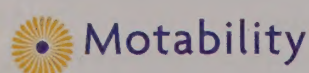


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## Time for true equality, says Scope

Disabled and non-disabled children must socialise together if society is to achieve true equality for disabled people, according to the charity Scope.

The demand came as Scope described practical measures it is testing to help take "segregation out of special schools", during a relaunch of its Time To Get Equal (TTGE) campaign.

Outlining Scope's education

policy, executive director Bob Benson said: "We will only end disablism when disabled and non-disabled children play and grow up together."

Addressing campaigners, policymakers and media figures, including Scope patrons Cherie Booth and Ade Adepitan, Mr Benson said Scope was looking to locate its schools alongside main-

stream schools and open them up to non-disabled children.

"We are looking at transforming school staff into community-based inclusion teams – therapists, nurses and other experts, who can support disabled children attending mainstream schools. This is not pie in the sky. It is already happening with our pioneering Scope inclusion team in Cornwall."



Big names on board: (pictured left to right) MP David Blunkett, Cherie Booth QC and Jon Sparkes, Scope's acting chief executive

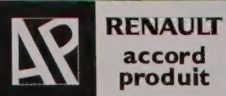
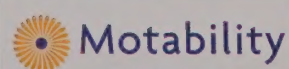
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## Children's hospices to be reviewed

BY JULIE GRIFFITHS

Charities representing children's hospices have welcomed the announcement of an independent review of children's palliative care services, but warned more short-term cash was needed.

The review, announced by health minister Ivan Lewis, will include how children's hospices are to be funded in the future.

The Association of Children's Hospices (ACH), the Association of Children's Palliative Care (ACT) and Help the Hospices said they hoped the review would result in more long-term government funding.

In May, ministers pledged £27million over three years to support children's hospices while they developed a long-term strategy for palliative care.

But Lizzie Chambers, chief executive of ACT, warned the sector needed immediate help.

She said: "Many local services are being forced to close this year due to the end of Big Lottery grants. This will hurt thousands of children and families who rely desperately on this support. The government needs to match its very welcome recent cash injection to children's hospices with some short-term funding for the wider public and voluntary sector now."

Ms Chambers added that ACT would press for the review to end service closures and cut-backs for good.

Barbara Gelb, chief executive of ACH, a charity set up to address issues of quality, governance and policy in the sector, described the review as "great news".

The review will feed into the chancellor's 2007 spending review.

A spokeswoman for Help the Hospices, a charity for the whole hospice movement, said adult palliative care services also needed sustainable funding, and hoped the review "will prove to be a step in the right direction".



# Remploy workers protest after factory sold to Arsenal



BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Remploy factory workers demonstrated outside Arsenal Football Club during a home game (above) to protest over possible closure of a factory.

The club is set to purchase the land, but workers are furious that Remploy has not secured an alternative factory site despite the expected closure date of 31 March.

Over 150 factory workers

passed out leaflets and secured signatures for a petition.

The demonstration on 13 October, before the Premiership game with Watford, came after the Trades Union Congress (TUC) voted to strike if "modernisation" plans, currently being negotiated by Remploy and the Remploy Trade Union Consortium (RTUC), include a move to close any factories.

During a protest at the Labour Party conference in

Manchester, John Hawkshaw, a community representative of RTUC, said he expected the closure of the factory in Holloway to spark a strike.

Demonstrators in Manchester said they feared being made redundant or being pushed into less skilled jobs, via Remploy's Interwork scheme.

Mr Hawkshaw said: "All they are doing is putting us into Asda and Tesco stacking shelves and sweeping floors."

Remploy will not confirm whether any factory will close until the modernisation plan is published, which may be next month.

But Anne McGuire, minister for disabled people, told *DN* that factory workers will be protected from compulsory redundancies.

Mrs McGuire said there were "no preconceived plans on the table", but that the management, unions and board of Remploy must develop a plan together.

She added: "I'm always positive about negotiations. I think when you get around the table and focus in on the issues, you get a far more productive operation than chucking missiles at each other from a trench."

## Muslim cab driver 'ill-informed' after banning guide dog

A senior Muslim cleric has said a taxi driver who refused to allow a guide dog in his car because it would breach Islamic law was "ill-informed" about his faith.

Minicab driver Abdul Rasheed Majekodunmi pleaded guilty last month, under the Disability Discrimination Act, to refusing to carry out the booking. He was fined £200 and told to pay £1,200 costs.

Mr Majekodunmi was asked to pick up Jane Vernon, a legal officer at the RNIB, after she was interviewed by BBC News 24 in west London.

She later said the incident in October 2005 made her feel like "a second-class citizen".

Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, chair of the inter faith relations committee of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), said the driver had been ill-informed about Muslim law.

Islamic law says Muslims should wash before praying if they come into contact with dog saliva, which is considered unclean and impure.

Shaykh Mogra said: "Muslim law lays down general laws, but there are circumstances where allowances have to be made."

MCB will meet with The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association next month to discuss the issue.

A Disability Rights Commission spokeswoman said the Muslim Shariat Council confirmed four years ago that assistance dogs can accompany disabled people into restaurants or taxis managed or driven by Muslims.

But she said it would be "dangerously wrong" to suggest discrimination was "the preserve of a particular group" as "misconception and downright ignorance of the law is rife".

## Abuse probe in notorious case

A review will examine allegations of ill-treatment of a man with autism whose detention in a hospital exposed a notorious loophole in mental health law.

HL, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was detained by Bournemouth Hospital in Surrey against his carers' wishes. He was unable to appeal his detention until being sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

In 2004, the European Court of Human Rights found HL's rights had been breached. The government is planning to amend the Mental Capacity Act to address the loophole.

HL's two carers, who maintain that he was badly treated at the hospital, welcomed the review by Surrey County Council's adult protection team.

One carer said: "We're really pleased. This is an acknowledgement that an investigation is warranted, because a review is not undertaken without due cause. I don't mind how long it takes so long as they don't gloss over things."

A council spokeswoman said the investigation would be run with the full involvement of HL's carers.

## Youth to share views on sex health

A new scheme will help young disabled people have more of a say in how sexual health services are developed.

Brook\*, the sexual health charity, will train a group of young disabled people to find out other young disabled people's views on sexual health services.

They will also represent their peers' views to service providers, policy makers

and the media.

Brook was awarded a £90,000 grant from the Camelot Foundation to develop the two-year Sexual Health Advocacy and Research Project.

The first group of young people will be recruited this autumn.

\* Young people can contact Brook free and in confidence, tel: 0800 0185 023 or visit: [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

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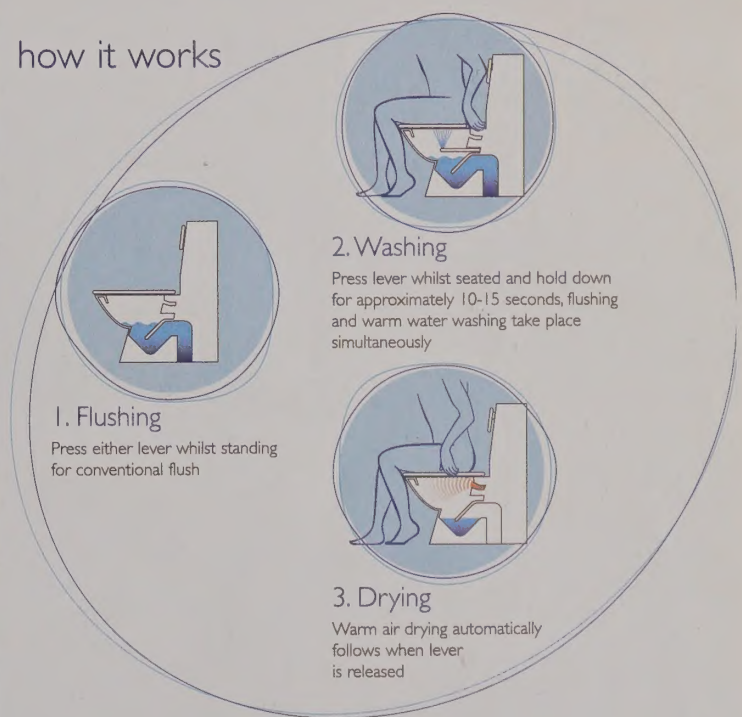
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## Medical bias misleads pregnant women

BY JULIE GRIFFITHS

Pregnant women are not being given accurate information about having a child with learning difficulties because many antenatal healthcare professionals present an unbalanced viewpoint, according to a new report\*.

The report said such "biased opinion" could affect a woman's decision about whether to abort her baby if the screening detects a learning difficulty.

Alison Giraud-Saunders, co-director of the Foundation for

People with Learning Disabilities (FPLD), which produced the report, said professionals focused on the medical problems associated with disabled babies. This did not give parents a sense of what it would be like to raise a child with learning difficulties, she said.

"There seem to be assumptions, some of them unspoken, that having a disabled baby is not something you would want."

"Health professionals need information to help them think about disabled people in a rounded way rather than as a

collection of pathologies."

The report also found that antenatal screening was presented as a routine procedure. Women were not always told about the implications and what decisions they may have to make if it showed the baby was likely to be disabled, it said.

The FPLD is now to research the information needs of parents-to-be and health professionals to ensure that pregnant women are fully supported in making informed decisions.

\* *Genetics: screening, choice and rights*, visit: [www.fpld.org.uk](http://www.fpld.org.uk)

## 'Extreme concern' over new ME guidance

Campaigners have heavily criticised new draft guidelines from a government advice body on how to treat ME and chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS).

The draft guidance\* from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) suggests that two behavioural treatments should be the "therapies of first choice".

But the 25% ME Group said it was "extremely concerned" about parts of the guidance, which will apply to the NHS in England and Wales, while Action for ME said it was "very concerned".

The 25% ME Group, which represents those most severely affected by ME, said its own surveys showed the two therapies, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and graded exercise therapy (GET), "have been unhelpful or even caused harm in a significant number" of people with the condition.

Dr Charles Shepherd, medical adviser to the ME Association, said there were "grave concerns" about the guidelines, which were based on "a very small number of research papers".

He said: "Where some may benefit from CBT or GET there

are plenty of other people who will not."

Dr Shepherd said it would cost about £180million to pay for CBT or GET for the estimated 180,000 people with mild or moderate forms of the condition, and there were not enough cognitive therapists to provide the treatment.

He added: "There is very little in this document that we actually like."

A public consultation will last until 24 November.

\*CFS/ME guideline, tel: 020 7067 5800 or visit: [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

## MS drugs funding resumed



Multiple sclerosis (MS) charities have welcomed a decision by the Welsh Assembly Government to resume funding of two multiple sclerosis drugs for newly diagnosed patients.

Many recently diagnosed MS patients had been denied access to the disease modifying therapies beta interferon (pictured) and glatiramer acetate in Wales because of funding problems.

The drugs were still available to those already diagnosed with MS in Wales and all patients in England.

Last month, Health Commission Wales, the agency responsible for commissioning specialised health services on

behalf of the assembly government, said additional funding meant the drugs would now be available.

Leigh Jeffes, executive officer of the MS Society Wales, said he was pleased about the decision, following a summer of campaigning by MS charities, patient groups and health professionals.

Mr Jeffes estimated around 25 patients in Wales would benefit, some of whom had been waiting for drugs for up to a year.

He said: "It was a crucial issue for us and, more importantly, for them."

The MS Trust also welcomed the news.



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# Paralympians face bathroom access farce

EXCLUSIVE BY BOBBY BENDER

Paralympic athletes were denied fundamental access needs during the most important disability athletics competition of the year.

Athletes complained that team accommodation for the IPC Athletics World Championships, near Assen in the Netherlands, did not have enough accessible loos or showers.

Wheelchair users were forced to use the toilet with the door open because of a lack of space and very few showers were fitted with seats.

After an injury to an Australian coach while using a shower, the Australian wheelchair racing team moved out of the athletes' village and into a nearby hotel.

Other athletes reported problems with the kilometre distance between accommodation and the meeting point to be ferried to the competition venue.

After complaints to organisers, a car was arranged to

tow a 12-seat trailer around the village.

UK athletes also noted problems with the facilities, but felt unable to talk to *DN* due to a contract signed with UK Athletics (UKA) binding them "not to make any public statement which is derogatory of UKA".

A UKA spokeswoman denied this would gag athletes from talking to the press in this instance. She said UKA could not be held responsible for poor access at the event in September, as it was organised by a local committee, EuroChamp.

Tim Jones, senior performance manager for UKA, admitted the facilities were "less than ideal", but admitted two members of UKA staff were sent months in advance to view the competition venue and athlete village.

Mr Jones said: "It is true that it appears the total number of wheelchair users from all participating teams did exceed those anticipated and some issues subsequently arose

around suitable access to all rooms and facilities."

He added: "One of the challenges that all major sporting teams face in travelling worldwide is to make the most of the accommodation provided, which is very rarely absolutely perfect for their needs."

An IPC spokeswoman said: "The IPC pushed EuroChamp on a number of occasions in areas where it was felt that they were not in accordance with the contractual obligations and prior commitments made by EuroChamp."

She said the IPC has included more "rigorous requirements" in the bid papers for the World Championships in 2010 to ensure the organising committee understands access.

She added that the IPC Accessibility Working Group is developing guidelines, which are expected in 2007, for future organising committees.

EuroChamp failed to comment.

*Additional reporting by Elizabeth Choppin*

## Tyne Tunnel triumph



Wheelchair athletes Shelly Woods and Kurt Fearnley (*pictured*) broke the women's and men's course records for the annual race through Newcastle's Tyne Tunnel.

During the Tunnel 2K, the athletes raced downhill for one kilometre and uphill for the second one. Woods clocked 5mins 21.1secs, beating Canadian Diane Roy by 5.2secs and breaking the 11-year-old women's course record by 31secs.

Fearnley squashed the

existing men's course record with nearly a minute to spare.

After the race, Woods said: "I know how much it hurts getting out of the tunnel and I've been training hard on my finish. Diane gave me a good run for my money but in the end it was my race for the taking."

Fearnley said: "The heavier guys were still in front at the bottom but hill climbing is my strength and I just powered my way up the second kilometre to win."

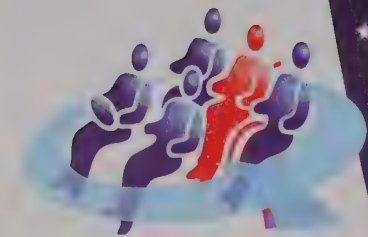
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## FRINGE FOCUS

Following Gordon Brown's declaration that services for disabled children have been one of the "greatest failures of social policy", Richard Howitt MEP urged campaigners to hold Labour to account.

Speaking at Scope's fringe event on inclusive education, Mr Howitt called for more resources, teacher training and better assessments.

He said: "All of our experience shows that the assessment [statement] is dependent on what is available rather than anything to do with the child."

David Blunkett admitted that anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs), which he introduced as home secretary, could be improved.

Mr Blunkett was pressed about the issue at a fringe meeting organised by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC). A delegate voiced concern about ASBOs being given to people with behaviour issues related to their impairment, such as autism.

Mr Blunkett said: "If I were doing [ASBOs] again, I would do them differently."

Shami Chakrabarti, director of Liberty, said: "The definition of anti-social behaviour is so broad that [civil orders] are capable of being abused, ironically abused against vulnerable people."

The DRC, Carers UK and the Equal Opportunities Commission have called for a "transformed" social care system.

Gerry Zarb, of the DRC, said social care must acknowledge unpaid carers and enable disabled people to live independently.

He said: "The underlying belief is that people who use care services are inherently vulnerable and the purpose [of care] is to look after them rather than support them to participate in society."

## back chat

Backchat spied DN guest editor Bert Massie giving David Blunkett a hard time at a fringe event. He said: "Many have accused David of making a few bad political decisions. I say he made at least one brilliant one – and that's appointing me as the chair of the DRC!" The joke went down so well that Bert used it at another event an hour later.



## PARTY Labour LOCATION Manchester WORDS Elizabeth Choppin

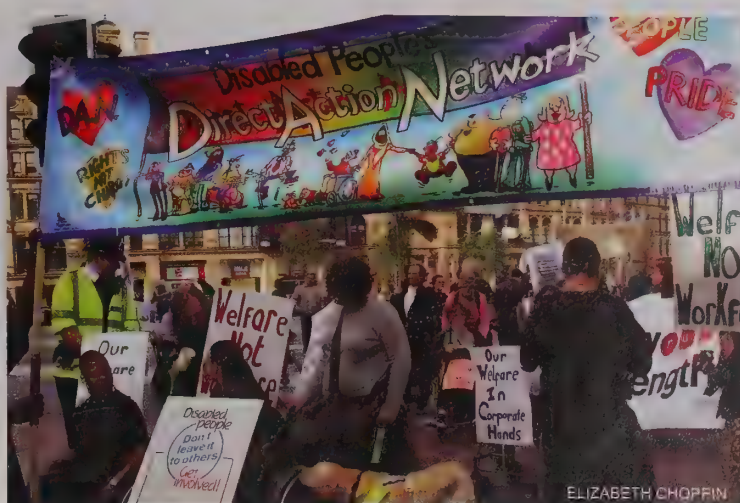
# Hundreds march over welfare reform

The welfare reform debate came to the boil as hundreds of disabled people demonstrated outside Labour's conference in Manchester.

The Coalition Against The Welfare Reform Bill protest involved organisations from across the country.

Flanked by police vehicles, the group marched from the city centre to the conference centre chanting "New Labour, slave labour".

Simone Aspis, parliamentary affairs officer for the British Council of Disabled People, said the government's plans to move one million people off benefits could force disabled people into



inappropriate work.

She said: "[The bill] starts in the wrong place. It starts on the premise of compulsion."

Alex Kemp, disability officer

for the National Union of Students, said: "To cut benefit and force us into work that we can't or don't want to do, or forcing us to have medical

treatments, is not appropriate or a progressive way forward."

Protesters were also concerned that the reforms will hand "lucrative contracts" to "unaccountable" organisations in the private and voluntary sector.

But Anne McGuire, minister for disabled people, told the Labour Party Disabled Members Group fringe meeting that welfare reform was "not about cutting benefits".

She acknowledged there were still many unanswered questions and said she expected many of those details to be "picked up and discussed" during the bill's committee stage.

# Chief admits his ignorance over disability equality duty

The newly-appointed head of the equalities commission has admitted he does not "know enough" about the disability equality duty (DED).

Trevor Phillips, currently chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, has been criticised by key disability figures since his appointment as chair of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR).

The commission will merge the commissions for disability, race equality and gender.

When pressed at a CEHR fringe event about how the organisation will use the DED to achieve equality for disabled people, Mr Phillips said: "I'm not sure I can say anything definitive about the way I think the specific duty ought to be used, simply because I don't know enough about it."

Mr Phillips said it was "rubbish for the head of an organisation to pretend to be an expert about everything", although he promised to use "every legit

tool" in the cause of equality.

The comments concerned some disabled delegates, who were unwilling to be named.

But Labour MP Anne Begg said she wished the post had gone to a disabled person.

She said: "One of my concerns is that in a big organisation the disability voice gets lost."

"There are some people who have concerns but [the commission] is there now – it's going to happen – so everyone has to help to make it work."

## Conference access better than ever

Access for disabled people at the conference was as good as it has ever been, according to the disabled members' group.

The group's general secretary, Janet Seymour Kirk, said she was "quite pleased" with the lay out of the G-Mex venue where exhibition halls and the main auditorium were located.

Last year, passes allowing disabled people to access all areas of the Brighton venue caused confusion. But Ms Seymour Kirk said G-Mex and the hotels used for fringe events had not raised any access issues.

## McGuire: Engaging employers key

There is still considerable work to be done in engaging employers in welfare reform, the minister for disabled people has told DN.

The admission by Anne McGuire came amid fears that the welfare reform bill does not focus enough on the role employers will have to play if the government is to meet its target of moving one million people from incapacity benefit into employment.

Mrs McGuire told the Labour Party Disabled Members Group fringe meeting that employers were still not confident in managing disability issues.

She later told DN that she agrees with work minister Jim Murphy, who said employers should mainly be led by the example of "enthusiastic" employers.

Mrs McGuire said: "In the same way disabled people are the best advocates for disabled people, employers are the best advocates to say, 'Yes, there is a business case here'."

She said the government was consulting with the Employers Forum on Disability and trying to get its message out to local employment groups.

She added: "I don't underestimate the challenge, but we are talking about changing the culture here."

She also denied that the government had set a bad example by removing Access to Work (ATW) funding from central government departments.

Matthew Lester, director of the Papworth Trust, told the Beginnings fringe the government should do a better job of promoting and funding employment schemes like ATW and Workstep.

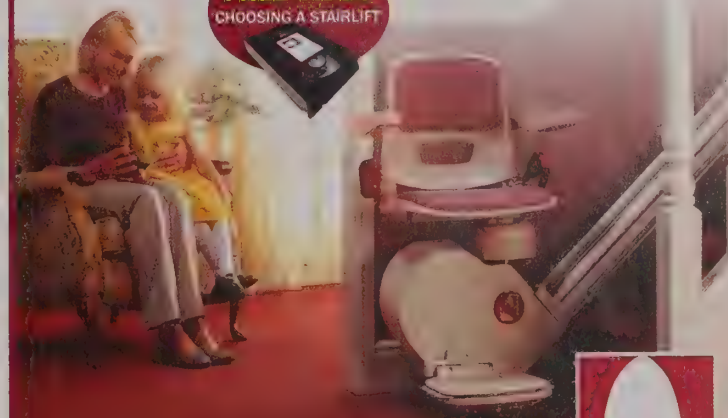
Mrs McGuire also told DN she was alert to the pressure on user-led organisations.

She said: "I don't underestimate some of the difficulties that centres for independent living are facing and it's an issue I will pick up with the cross-ministerial group to see whether or not there is anything else we can do."

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GIVE YOUR LIFE A LIFT



**PARTY** Conservative **LOCATION** Bournemouth **WORDS** John Pring

## Hunt hints at single assessment system

A Conservative government would move towards a single assessment of disabled people for all the services and benefits they receive, *DN* has been told.

Jeremy Hunt, the shadow disabled people's minister (*pictured, left, with Conservative Disability Group chair Jim Hattersley*), said a simplified process would mean disabled people would not have to go through a "plethora of assessments".

But he said it would be difficult to enable different government departments to accept each other's information.

He said simpler assessment procedures would mean "much more money goes into the

pockets of disabled people rather than being spent on commissioning and assessment".

He said his party would not announce its new disability policies for another year, following a review process, but it would aim to remove disincentives to work from the benefits system.

He said he wanted to make it easier for people with fluctuating conditions to "step in and out of the benefits system" and avoid losing the "benefits package they have spent months and months negotiating".

He said he was also concerned the government might find it harder to convince employers to take on disabled employees due to the influx of



cheap labour from new members of the European Union.

Mr Hunt also said there was "no opposition" in principle among shadow minister to *DN*'s campaign to extend winter fuel payments to severely

disabled people under 60.

But he could not make a commitment to extend payments because "we have no idea what the economic climate will be like in three to four years' time".

## Disabled speaker cancels after access frustration

A leading disability rights campaigner has criticised the access arrangements for obtaining conference passes.

Ian Loynes, director of Southampton Centre for Independent Living, was due to speak at a fringe event but went home after an unsuccessful two-hour wait for his pass.

The late accreditation office was inaccessible due to steps and the wait caused by queues.

He said: "It is not great for a party [conference] not to be totally accessible."

CCO Conferences (CCOC),

which organised the conference, said arrangements were made for mobility impaired people to be taken to an accessible entrance but the system had been "overwhelmed" by the numbers queuing for passes.

CCOC managing director Shirley Mathews said she was "truly sorry" for Mr Loynes's access problems.

Access at the main conference venue, the Bournemouth International Centre, was "150 per cent better" than last year's Blackpool conference, according to delegate Carol Hattersley.

## Cameron: More for independent living but the rights act still goes

Conservative leader David Cameron told the conference that he wants to see more money for adaptations to help people live independently and more support for carers.

He told delegates that the world of healthcare "extends far beyond the hospitals and the GP surgeries".

He said: "Why can't we have more occupational therapy, so people can get the adjustments to their house or flat so they can go on living at home longer?"

And he called for recognition that social services for many people was "the vital service that helps them enjoy some sort of quality of life".

Mr Cameron (*pictured*) also confirmed in his main speech that he would abolish the



Human Rights Act (HRA) and replace it with a British bill of rights. The DRC has said scrapping the act would be "a disaster for disabled people".

Jeremy Hunt told *DN* that any replacement for the act would offer equal protection to disabled people.

He said: "None of the changes we would like to see to the HRA would involve any lessening of rights to disabled people."

## Tories tackle SEN conflict of interest

A Conservative government is likely to separate the assessment of special educational needs (SEN) from its funding, *DN* has been told.

Jeremy Hunt said the state-menting system for disabled children was "a disaster" and had become an unofficial way of rationing access to SEN.

He said: "The parents of disabled children spend most of their time in a battle with the state instead of where it should be, which is looking after their children."

He said councils had a conflict of interest because they were responsible for both assessing a disabled child and then funding any needs the assessment uncovered.

He added: "I would like to see whether we could make that system independent, to give parents confidence so any

decision reached was not reached on financial grounds, it was reached on the basis of the needs of their children."

He also called for assessments to be "passportable" so they could follow the family if they moved to a new area.

And he backed the need for special schools, a call echoed by Conservative leader David Cameron.

Mr Cameron told the conference that he disagreed with educating children with learning difficulties in the same classes as "the brightest pupils".

He said: "Real equality means giving every child the education that is best for them...and it means saving special schools – so that parents have choice, and children with learning difficulties can receive the care, the education and the attention they need."

## FRINGE FOCUS

A campaigner said the government's welfare reform programme could drag more families with disabled members into poverty.

Kate Green, of the Child Poverty Action Group, said her organisation was "very doubtful" about current cross-party support for the plans.

She told a fringe meeting: "The attempt to move more disabled adults and parents into employment, while good in theory, is going to present very considerable challenges in practice."

"We are very concerned that what will happen in practice is we will see more families at risk of poverty."

The Conservative Party is unlikely to back Lord Ashley's Independent Living Bill.

Stephen O'Brien, shadow minister for care services, told a DRC fringe event that the party agreed with the principles, but there were "serious problems" with a lack of detail in parts of the bill.

He said: "It is the impact on the whole structure of service provision which at the moment has not been properly assessed."

A leading psychiatrist is "fed up" with the portrayal of people with mental health problems as "violent and workshy".

Dr Tony Zigmond, of The Royal College of Psychiatrists, criticised the government's attempted mental health reforms and compared them with those of the Scottish Executive, which were "universally welcomed".

He told the Mental Health Alliance fringe the Conservative Party had been "extremely supportive".

David Tombs, a mental health service user, said the government's draft bills were "a witchhunt" against people with personality disorders, who faced being detained indefinitely "without trial and without treatment".

## back chat

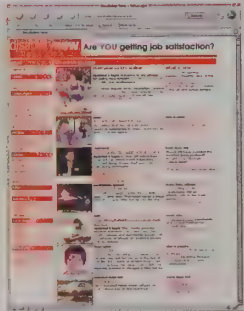
Shadow chancellor George Osborne will receive a written slap on the wrist from a fellow MP, after he "jokingly" suggested in an interview that Gordon Brown has autism.

Angela Browning, who has a son with the condition, told *Backchat* she would offer her services if he should wish to improve his autism awareness.

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## FRINGE FOCUS

The Liberal Democrats' shadow housing minister has called on the government to make more new homes accessible to disabled people.

Dan Rogerson MP called for the Lifetime Homes Standard – a set of 16 access features – to become part of building regulations.

He said Liberal Democrats would persuade developers to ensure all new homes are adaptable for wheelchair users and a “significant proportion” conform to the standard.

Speaking at a DRC and Age Concern fringe event, he said local authorities should be given more power to designate areas for accessible housing.

Urgent action must be taken to tackle the attitudinal barriers preventing people with mental health problems from working, a fringe meeting heard.

Angela Greatley, chief executive of the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health (SCMH), told the fringe run by SCMH, the Smith Institute and Pfizer that attitudes of staff posed as big a threat as those of employers.

Lord Addington, the party's spokesman on disabled people in the Lords, said the work and benefits system needed to be more flexible.

He said: “The idea that people will be intermittently incapable of work is something the benefits system does not handle at all well.”

A disabled woman has said she feels “let down” by government policies that prevent people like her from working.

Speaking at an RNIB and Help the Aged fringe event, Dolly McLoughlan, 58, from London, said she had always worked and felt “absolutely awful being dependent and I don't want handouts from the government”.

## back chat

When comedian Laurence Clark had to attend to a call of nature during the party conference, he headed for the accessible toilet at the Quality Hotel, or the “Inclusion Hotel”, as it was dubbed by the DRC. Unfortunately, when he grabbed a handle to lift himself off the toilet, it came off...along with part of the wall. Inclusion Hotel? Backchat thinks they might have to rename it next year.



**PARTY** Liberal Democrats **LOCATION** Brighton **WORDS** Priya Kotecha

# Party backs IL centres

Liberal Democrats have backed a motion calling for user-led independent living (IL) centres in every local authority area within four years.

The IL motion – the party's first new disability policy since 1999 – called for a social model perspective and “represents a long-term ambition to significantly improve the position of disabled people in society”.

And it backed individual budgets for disabled people to replace the “one-size-fits-all provision of services”, and a removal of barriers to employment.

The party also wants to see stronger minimum statutory



standards for provision of services to disabled people.

The motion came as the party released a new paper that aims to set out a long-term framework for its disability policy\*. Presenting the motion to the conference, Danny

Alexander, shadow minister for disabled people (pictured), said the party's disability policies should focus on “how barriers can be broken down”.

He said: “What the motion does do is commit the party to a radical progressive new policy

framework which puts the rights of disabled people to live independently as equal citizens at the heart of our approach.”

Mr Alexander told *DN* that the government's aim to get disabled people off Incapacity Benefit and into work was “absolutely right” but there were “lots of concerns about the specifics”, such as how to engage employers in the reform process.

He said the party has launched a policy working group to look at tackling poverty and inequality.

\* *Independent Living – a policy development paper on disability*; visit: [www.libdems.org.uk](http://www.libdems.org.uk)

## Dame Jane: Assisted dying is ‘bill of fear’

A leading disability rights campaigner has told Liberal Democrats the main reason people seek assisted suicide is because they “do not want to be a burden”.

Jane Campbell, a DRC commissioner, told a fringe meeting that the Liberal Democrat peer Lord Joffe's assisted dying bill – which aims to legalise assisted suicide – was “a bill of fear”.

She told the meeting, organised by the DRC, Not Dead Yet and the Policy, Ethics and Life Sciences Research Centre, that

she was aware the Liberal Democrats were “supportive of euthanasia”.

She said the bill failed to secure the endorsement of any organisation of disabled people and “raises deep concerns about how we are viewed by society and especially health service professionals”.

Baroness Thomas of Wallis Wood, a Liberal Democrat peer, said her party broadly supported giving disabled people the choice to ask for support to end their lives.

She said: “It is, if you like, an issue of autonomy. Do I have the power? I who have chosen all my life who to live with, who to talk to, who to marry, where to work, all those things, do I also have the right under very, very difficult circumstances, when to die?”

But Danny Alexander told *DN* he was “very sceptical” about Lord Joffe's bill and he would vote against any proposals to legalise assisted suicide, on moral grounds.

## Easy access

Access was greatly improved from last year, according to the Liberal Democrat Disability Association (LDDA).

LDDA vice chair, Gemma Roulston, said the group did not have any major access concerns with the Brighton venue.

Ms Roulston said LDDA members were pleased with how easy it was to move between the conference centre and fringe venues, and that people with sensory impairments had not faced any barriers.

## ‘Rights act should stay’

The Liberal Democrats' disability spokesman has dismissed calls by lawyers in the party for the Human Rights Act (HRA) to be replaced by a UK bill of rights.

Lord Lester QC, president of the Liberal Democrat Lawyers Association (LDLA), told the group's fringe event it was time to “have a proper coherent written constitution”.

He said the government had failed to push the human rights agenda forward and a bill of rights would act as a “code of ethical values” with which “the British public can identify”.

This summer, activists, academics and human rights lawyers called on the government to support the HRA and pledged to fight “attempts to scrap or water down” the act.

Danny Alexander told *DN*: “The HRA is an important part of our legislative framework and we don't want to repeal it and we don't want to change it.”

“We think it provides very valuable safeguards and a lot of the criticisms of it are over-hyped.”

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JAMIE TROUNCE



# D-Day looms for disability equ

With the disability equality duty coming into force this December there are concerns that some public bodies are not ready for the change. Elizabeth Choppin reports

demonstrate that action has been taken.

Public bodies must report on progress every year and review and revise the scheme every three years.

An example of how one might work in practice, would be that if a local authority found disabled people in its area were affected by a high incidence of burglary and crime, it would be obliged to address the issue.

The scheme might involve targeted crime prevention advice or security grants for devices like alarms or window locks.

Or, a health trust might improve the way it keeps track of information, to reduce the gap in services between disabled and non-disabled people. It might tackle the low number of women with learning difficulties using breast-screening services, for example.

Marie Pye, head of the DED for the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), says the duty provides "a fantastic framework" to address the institutional discrimination plaguing public authorities, with a "specific role" for disabled people to play, as they will have input into schemes.

She feels the duty will make a difference "not on an individual drip, drip level" but across whole organisations.

She says: "Almost every major indicator shows that disabled people fare worse. They fare worse because of the way our institutions are structured. This duty will make public bodies look at the way they do things."

However, disability experts

are worried that some organisations are not prepared for the December deadline and are not truly involving disabled people in the development of their schemes.

Ms Pye says she has seen some great examples of organisations reaching out to disabled people, but some are not doing it in the correct way – or worse, not at all.

Although she will not name specific bodies which are lagging behind, she says local councils have been more responsive to the duty than the health sector.

**'The world will not change on 5 December. We're saying the hard work starts on 5 December'**

But she is confident that the DRC's damning report on health services for people with mental health conditions and learning difficulties (*DN October, page 1*) has generated a "surge of interest".

She says: "It is not about producing a scheme and consulting with disabled people by asking: 'Is this okay?' It's involving them from the beginning. We're not interested in whether people are ticking a box."

The DRC has encouraged public bodies to make use of its guidance and code of practice.

Ms Pye says the bodies involving disabled people in a real way will be "achieving something tangible and practical, instead of something that won't have any impact".

Those bodies will also more likely avoid enforcement action, which could start as soon as January.

If a public authority does not comply with its general or specific duties, it could be subject to judicial review by "anyone with sufficient interest in the matter" or a compliance notice by the DRC.

The London Development Agency (LDA) has been lauded by the DRC as an example of good practice in preparation for the DED.

Frances McAndrew, head of equalities for the LDA, says part of its success is due to "grabbing" the code of practice as soon as it was published two years ago.

Ms McAndrew says the LDA set up a staff network of disabled people as well as an independent panel of disabled people, and has run workshops.

The LDA scheme will be available in easy-read format after a consultation with the learning difficulties group People First.

The LDA says it is important that disabled people are paid for their input.

Ms McAndrew dismisses the idea that smaller bodies, which do not have the LDA's budget levels, cannot afford to pay disabled people.

"I say to them: 'You have the money but you've chosen to spend it in other things.' It's a matter of leadership and priorities. It's relative, even if it means they take on one consultant for a week."

She stresses that delivering disability equality is not a huge cost if implemented at the beginning instead of trying to adjust later.

But she is keen to stress that the LDA is not resting on its laurels – the DED has become a "living, breathing ethos" that goes far beyond simply

producing a document by December.

"We are mindful that we've only just begun, and we have much more to do," she says. "It's about understanding. It's not about writing a document, it's about improving outcomes."

"Years of anti-discrimination legislation hasn't changed the outcomes for disabled people. It was more about individuals bringing cases instead of putting the responsibility on public bodies. This turns the whole thing on its head and says it is our job to stop institutional discrimination."

It remains to be seen whether health trusts will cover all the bases before the deadline.

Jo Davies, director of the NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights in Wales, says there is not one overall approach for individual health trusts and that they are all in "various stages of preparation".

She says each trust is responding to local needs, which vary, and are working with local health boards, voluntary sector organisations and in partnership with each other. "Some have got a community-based approach and are working across sector, and others have been less successful."

But the feeling at disability organisations is that too many public authorities are doing a rushed, patched-together job.

Jane Vernon, legal officer for the RNIB, says that the bulk of schemes started to stream in as recently as September.



DRC

**W**ith the deadline for the disability equality duty (DED) fast approaching, Britain's 45,000 public bodies are scrambling to meet the requirements of the new law.

The DED, which comes into force on 5 December, is meant to ensure that all public authorities – such as central or local government, schools, health trusts or emergency services – pay "due regard" to the promotion of equality for disabled people in every area of their work.

They must do away with discrimination and harassment, promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes toward disabled people, and take steps to meet their needs.

Most public authorities are also covered by specific duties.

They include publishing a disability equality scheme (DES); most bodies must publish theirs this December. Each scheme should include an action plan, involve disabled people in producing the scheme, and be able to





December deadline: The DED will ensure public sector bodies, including local and central government, healthcare providers and emergency services, comply with new requirements to ensure equal opportunities for disabled people

# Equality duty... but is everybody ready?

"Things have been left to the last minute as they always are and organisations are not ready."

Public bodies that have sent completed schemes for approval by the RNIB have been alerted that they have not adequately involved disabled people in the process.

She recalls one local authority that has been "looking at the spirit of it

[DED] and not just complying. But that is by no means typical".

The first thing public bodies tend to look at, Ms Vernon says, is physical access.

Needs for people with sensory impairments are not always at the forefront of change, she says, but being able to get accessible information on things like council tax and housing benefits are core issues for this group.

"You need to be thinking about and pre-empting those issues," she says.

Ms Vernon is sceptical about the effect the DED will have.

"I don't think that by December compliance with this will by any means be universal. How long has the race equality duty been in? We still hear shocking statistics about organisations not complying with it. This will be much the same."

Chris Sherwood, equality and diversity training manager at Scope, agrees that some of the action plans are quite "woolly" but believes the DED is an important step in removing institutional barriers.

"If you go in there with a legislative stick and beat them with it, I think that people will not engage with the equality agenda. Yet it shouldn't be a toothless piece

of legislation, either."

But Marie Pye warns that the aspirations of the DED will take time.

"This is not going to change things overnight," she says. "The world will not change on 5 December. We're saying the hard work starts on 5 December."

\* For more information, contact the Disability Rights Commission, tel: 08457 622 633 or visit: [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)



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# Time to get equal

## Star speaks out for equality



David Bourroughs has cerebral palsy and has been a volunteer at Scope for the past six months – in our corporate fundraising team. At our recent Time to Get Equal gala dinner he interviewed soul singer Beverley Knight MBE and together they discussed equality and how an image-obsessed music industry makes it difficult for disabled people to progress. When David asked Beverley about the progress of X-Factor contestant and wheelchair user Kerry McGregor, she replied, "...Kerry, who sings beautifully and because she is in a wheelchair people are seeing the chair first. I would prefer it if people heard her voice. It's difficult because people are so consumed by what they see."

David said, "Do you think she will get the sympathy vote?"

Beverley replied, "This is the problem, I think people will hear and go she's ever so good and go arrrrhhh bless her (and vote) out of sympathy. Instead of saying she's good, better than the other people – vote for her. She doesn't want pity, she wants to win."

David recently took part in the research for the Scope and Leonard Cheshire report *Can Do Volunteering!* It gives volunteer managers guidance that will make their volunteering opportunities available to young disabled people. You can get copies of the report from [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk) or [www.leonard-cheshire.org](http://www.leonard-cheshire.org)



## One million people for equality – Annual General Meeting 2006

Focusing on the ups and downs of the past year, delegates at the Scope Annual General Meeting held on 14 October 2006 were encouraged to add their voices to the "groundswell of support" for equality for disabled people.

Accompanying a discussion about the financial challenges we experienced during 2005/6, and the active steps taken to overcome these, a proud sequence of the successes of that same period were displayed on the large screens at the Renewal Conference Centre in Solihull.

Recent changes to the governing body of Scope were highlighted as Chairman Gerald McCarthy introduced four recently co-opted Trustees, each bringing a particular area of expertise to the executive council. The election of six new Trustees by Scope members was also announced. A full and independent review of

the governance of the charity is underway, chaired by former Chief Executive of ACEVO (Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations) Dorothy Dalton, a respected expert in the field.

In an impassioned speech to Scope members and representatives, our new Executive Director of External Affairs Stephen Bowen used the words of the late Robert Kennedy to emphasise our ambitious target of one million people being actively engaged in support of Scope and Time to Get Equal by 2012:

"Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

For more information on Time to get equal visit [www.timetogetequal.org.uk](http://www.timetogetequal.org.uk) or contact Abigail Lock on 020 7619 7253.



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## WORLD VIEW

### RICHARD LIGHT

The UN is expected to adopt a historic human rights treaty, but that does not mean our work is finished

On 25 August, agreement was reached on the content of the United Nations (UN) first human rights treaty of the millennium – the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This marked the conclusion of five-years' work by an ad hoc committee, set up by the UN General Assembly to advise on such a treaty. For disabled people's organisations, it was the high watermark of a campaign lasting more than two decades.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities\*, which is likely to be adopted by the UN General Assembly on 11 December this year, is a landmark treaty in a number of ways:

It acknowledges disabled people's humanity and equal entitlement to existing human rights standards;

It prompted unprecedented involvement by civil society (NGOs and other organisations representing disabled people);

It was agreed in half the

time required for the UN's last human rights convention and raised the profile of disability and human rights across the international community.

The process was also noteworthy from a domestic perspective, in that the official delegation to the UN ad hoc committee included a disabled activist, nominated to ensure that the views of disabled Britons were accounted for.

Once the UN General

**'Disabled people have been the recipients of empty rhetoric and unmet promises'**

Assembly adopts the convention, member states will be invited to sign and ratify it. At the time of writing, the UK is expected to be amongst the first states to do so.

Some reports appear to suggest that the General Assembly's adoption of the text marks the end of the process; this is not a view I share.

Disabled people have, far

too often, been the recipients of empty rhetoric and unmet promises; equally, the fact that disability could have a human rights element, rather than simply being a medical or welfare issue, has yet to percolate through all the relevant organisations, either governmental or non-governmental.

The convention addresses a broad range of human rights, including the right to life, health, work, education and an adequate standard of living and testifies to the commitment and determination of both disabled activists and the UK government, which has vigorously contributed to the development of the convention.

Like a great many other disabled people, I am now looking to the government to ensure that it is amongst the first states to sign – and implement – the treaty.

\* For more information on the convention, visit:

[www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable)

\* For information specific to disabled Britons, visit:

[www.un-convention.info](http://www.un-convention.info)

Guest world view columnist Richard Light is a public policy adviser, human rights activist and a member of the international committee of the British Council of Disabled People. He was also a member of the UK's official delegation to the UN ad hoc committee.



## TOP TALK

### NICK DANAGHER

Under attack, but not dead yet

Much debate has appeared in the media this year about bioethics and the eradication of certain impairments through so-called advances in science.

Some disabled people do not see such efforts as advances, because they are based on the assumption that the lives of people with certain impairments are not worth living.

Support has been gathering on both sides of the Atlantic for an alternative view to be acknowledged and respected.

In May, Lord Joffe unsuccessfully tabled his assisted dying bill before the House of Lords. This would allow doctors – the majority of whom oppose the bill – to actively assist the deaths of terminally ill people.

At the same time, disabled people launched the Not Dead Yet campaign (NDYUK)\*. This is a movement started in the USA by disabled people who fear that assisted dying legislation will mean that value judgements will be made over our quality of life and support to sustain our lives will be withdrawn without our consent. Many of us know

of instances where this has already happened.

Pro-euthanasia group Dignity in Dying has tried to ignore this and dismiss campaigners as "religious fanatics". NDYUK is a secular campaign network of disabled people who have joined a growing international alliance of those who oppose legalised killing.

Lesley Burke challenged the General Medical Council's policy that could allow doctors to withdraw artificial feeding tubes if a person's impairment deteriorates (DN October 2006, page 15).

Mr Burke and thousands of other disabled and terminally ill people still cannot be sure that their wishes to be kept alive will be respected. Until we have the right to independent living support and palliative care, real choice will not be available to anyone.

Still, the notion of independent living features prominently on the political agenda. The fact that we are on that agenda at all shows that we are not dead yet.

\* Not Dead Yet UK, email: [info@livingwithdignity.info](mailto:info@livingwithdignity.info) or visit: [www.livingwithdignity.info](http://www.livingwithdignity.info)

Nick is a freelance consultant on disability equality

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## CELEB SCENE

### TANNI GREY THOMPSON

The USA is leading the way in disabled children's sport thanks to the efforts of a talented teenager

Tatyana McFadden is a name that is set to appear in wheelchair racing circles for years to come.

At just 15 she qualified for the US Paralympic team in Athens and won two medals on the track – a silver in the 100m and a bronze in the 200m.

At the IPC World Athletics Championships in September she became one of the few who has beaten Chantal Petitclerc and took a world record.

Off the track, as much as on it, Tatyana is spreading the message of disability sport.

Born in a St Petersburg orphanage and considered "not good" because she had spina bifida, Tatyana's prospects were considered slim, but her life changed

when an American woman called Debbie McFadden – who worked for the US Department of Health and Human Services, providing humanitarian aid overseas – decided to adopt her.

Tatyana is a natural athlete who could pick any sport and succeed at it.

While wheelchair racing is encouraged at school in the US, Tatyana found it hard to compete locally. She was allowed to practise with her school team, but not compete. So she filed a federal law suit to enable her to take part in the same races as her school colleagues.

She wanted to take part in a real race against runners, but not be scored with them. It

was a competition that she was looking for.

Many people say that Tatyana would be so far behind the non-disabled athletes that it wouldn't help her – they obviously don't know her personal bests.

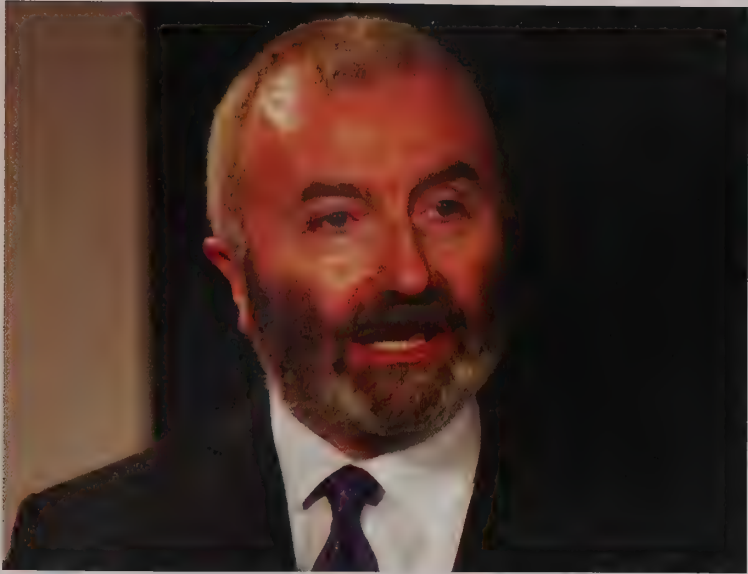
At the moment the scoring system looks upon the event as two races, which is probably the best situation for everyone. The competition isn't equitable, but at least Tatyana now has someone to compete against.

It means she finally has an opportunity to improve her performance and may encourage school boards to reconsider how they involve disabled children in sport.

Dame Tanni is the UK's most successful Paralympic athlete and a disability campaigner



# The right way for independent living



For independent living to become a reality, the government must join its forces and work in new ways, says Andy Rickell

I have mixed feelings over the decision by the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) to hold a review of independent living (IL).

Work is needed to meet the aspirations for disabled people's equality set out in the government's *Improving The Life Chances* report, and review chair, Dame Jane Campbell, is the right person to lead it, having been an advocate of IL over many years.

The review should make clear IL should feature in a society that believes in personal freedom and the positive contribution all its citizens can make – and that it is entirely feasible in a country as rich as ours.

But my doubt lies in it being announced as the Independent Living Bill had its second reading.

IL simply means that disabled and older people have choice and control over their

lives. Many disabled people who require support to participate as citizens find such support lacking or with strings attached.

The law prevents us being discriminated against directly because of our disability, gender or age, but we do not have the right to participate in work or society. The Independent Living Bill would fill those gaps.

We should have the right to funding that enables us to overcome barriers, whether that means communication support, advocacy, peer support, personal assistance, equipment, accessible transport or accessible buildings.

Providing the right to IL could cost the taxpayer money, which politicians think will cost them votes.

But much of the funding needed is available already. The government spends billions of pounds on disability annually, however, it spends this badly – sometimes resulting in dependency.

If we had a system that put disabled people in the driving seat and allowed them to choose how government money is spent on support and services – whether through direct payments or individual budgets

– that money would be much better spent. We would get what we need, not what the government guesses we need.

To support this funding we need local organisations of people – centres for independent living – who understand our needs and can work with us to complete self-assessments.

We need more competition between equipment and service providers so we get better deals

**'Different government departments have to pool funding and work together in new ways'**

and cheaper prices.

Providers of support services should treat us as valued customers, not do a cosy deal with our local authority without us getting a say.

To make this a reality, the ODI needs to give leadership across government. Individual budgets, direct payments and other mechanisms that put choice and control in disabled and older peoples' hands have to be rolled out nationally. Different government departments have to pool funding and work together

in new ways.

Through reinforcing the disability equality duty on public bodies – which comes into force next month – the ODI should ensure people have a real say in how the system delivers IL.

I do not think any particular group of disabled or older people should be singled out as a priority in the review.

The crucial issue is to make sure IL is available to all, which may mean some groups need more support than others.

Therefore, I think issues around advocacy and communication support should be a priority – to make it possible for us to make a choice and communicate it. And, when we know people's choices, some priority should be given to those whose current situation is far from their wishes and society's expectations.

Scope will offer the review its report on IL, written in conjunction with Demos and Disability Awareness in Action, as well as proposals on welfare reform that would further support it. We await its findings with hope.

Andy Rickell is executive director for diversity, politics and planning at Scope

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# Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the acting editor Sarah Hobson, Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW, minicom: 020 7619 7332, fax: 020 7619 7331, email: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk. Please include your telephone number.



## Blue badge holders not exempt from parking abuse

I am becoming increasingly frustrated at the blatant abuse of disabled parking bays.

In Portsmouth, in Old Market Street, there is a massive carpark with at least 30 well marked disabled parking bays.

All the relevant slopes and drop kerbs are in place, making them fully accessible.

Next to the carpark is a road leading to the shopping centre. It has double yellow lines and is full of disabled driver's vehicles

– some are even parked across the slopes and dropped kerbs. How thoughtless.

I am not disablist. My father is a wheelchair user and blue badge holder.

There is nothing worse than trying to find a slope in the pavement so he can get out of the carpark, only to find that it has been parked over by a blue badge holder, who should know better.

Brian Clifford, via email

# DLA and direct payments

Rachel Wilson's reply to Alison of Manchester (*DN October, page 30*) regarding her question about Direct Payments and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is misleading.

Unless a local authority (LA) has a no-charging policy for community care (Manchester does not) then a person's DLA will be taken into account, along with any other income they have, when assessing the level of charging.

If that person then needs to approach the Independent Living Fund (ILF) for further care support, the ILF will

charge at an even higher rate than a LA – although an LA will usually waive its charge because ILF will have taken any available income.

There is another issue concerning Direct Payments (DP) of which people should be aware.

Someone receiving direct services, who is being charged by their LA, will receive a bill for that charge. But, if that person cannot afford to pay the bill the LA cannot stop providing the service.

The LA may take the person

to court to recoup the payment (which is unlikely) but they must continue to provide the service.

But in the case of DPs most, if not all LAs, deduct the charge before the payment is made into the person's account. Therefore, if the person cannot afford the charge, the only thing they can do is reduce the hours of support that they buy with their DP, which is effectively the same as the LA failing in its duty of care to that person.

Vin West, Gwynedd Direct Payments Forum

## Just want to shop like everyone else

Over the past few weeks, I have been trying to get Asda's supermarket at Swansea to sort out their new shopping trollies.

They have changed their manufacturer and the low square trollies that I always used have been replaced with higher larger ones that do not fit onto my wife's wheelchair. They are only suited to basic wheelchairs.

My local Asda has bent over backwards to try and sort this out. Staff have made suggestions such as altering a trolley for us to use – I declined

this because what happens if I turn up and someone has taken the trolley?

They have offered to have a member of staff to walk around with us but we don't want to be singled out, we want to shop just like everyone else.

All we want is a bit of equality. Asda's head office should get their act together and make new suppliers do what their customers want, not what is most cost-effective for them.

Norman-Gillian Taylor, Swansea

## Buses are bad news

I note with interest the article regarding problems that disabled people have had accessing Stagecoach buses.

I paid particular notice to this article because my mother and I have just returned from a holiday in Blairgowrie, Scotland. I am a wheelchair user and have been treated with disrespect whilst travelling on Stagecoach buses.

The two drivers I encountered never used the ramps and one even moved away from the stop before I was fastened into the wheelchair space, causing me to swerve.

Obviously, Stagecoach needs to reconsider its training regarding disability awareness.

Louise Colvin, via email

I have just read about the complaints against Stagecoach (*DN, October, page 4*).

Here in West Yorkshire, First Bus Company can be just as bad. It seems that they improved access to buses under the Disability Discrimination Act but only for pushchair users.

I have been refused access on to a bus and even had a bus set off without me.

I try to be courteous to pushchair users because I can actually fold up my chair – I am not in it permanently – but they do not seem to return the favour to others.

And why should disabled people have to book in advance to travel, especially if they use the buses every day!

Sean Hinchliffe, via email

Clarification: Roger Jones was not "let go" by the Solihull Times in 2002 (*DN October, employment supplement, page v*), but he was put on a period of unpaid, extended sick leave after a company doctor decided he was incapable of doing his job. Roger returned to work in 2003 and is now off again due to a shoulder injury. Our apologies for any confusion.

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# web watch

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## Being independent is lonely

I am a single female and my impairment makes it impossible to hold a job down. This means that I cannot really consider looking for a partner, since I cannot expect anyone to pick up the tab for me. And, if I move in with someone, my benefits could be affected. I'm pretty unhappy about this.  
Cinnamon

I did not expect to meet a woman with spina bifida but I fell head over heels and married. I worked and was happy to make sure we were secure. She worked when she could, I never felt it was hard or unfair. I am now disabled after an accident and for four years my wife looked after me. If you live with somebody you might lose some housing benefit depending on what he earns, but who cares?  
Robc

A disabled person doesn't retain their freedom in a relationship when they live on the partner's charity. Nowadays, life requires two incomes so it gets tough to have a live-in relationship. Also, consider the impact on people who want to leave a relationship but can't because they don't have any money of their own. I see many reasons why a disabled person who is genuinely unable to work should have an income independent of their family, if only for their own dignity.  
Pluto's widow

If we all decided we could not afford to have a relationship because of financial difficulties it would be a poor world. My wife and I lump our money together being we are both disabled. We have a grandson who has lived with us since birth and we cope. He has everything he needs, so to say two people cannot live because one is on benefits is ridiculous. We were talking about commitment. If a potential partner considers money a major problem, I would run a million miles from them.  
Robn

I am fortunate that I have many friends, from all walks of life, but I wouldn't have met any of them if I sat at home twiddling my thumbs. Get out there girl, do something so you get in contact with people. Use your personal experiences to help others through. You'll suddenly find that special person when you stop looking, I did. Involve yourself with as many things as you can to get your confidence back and everything else will just fall into place. Being on benefits should not be a disability of its own. Go to your local charity shop, sit behind the till and take the money. Go to your local school and offer to tell your life story to the kids. You must be brave, be confident, be happy.  
Dogposhpaws

I'm young, single and just found out that I'm not going to be as independent as I had thought because of my impairment. It has occurred to me a few times that I am not financially self-sufficient but I don't think it is the end of the world. When I fall in love with the right guy I don't think I'll have too much of a problem with money, but I do think it takes some adjusting to. You just need to give yourself a bit of time to get used to the idea.  
Jessie

## Medical muddle

I have been off work for two years with mental health difficulties, which include agoraphobia. I was asked to go for a medical last year but I couldn't even step outside my front door. My GP wrote a letter to medical services and I received a letter from the benefits office (BO) saying that they would review in a year. So, I got a phone call a few weeks ago asking me to go for another medical – which would involve taking three buses – even though I had told the BO that I still could only walk short distances from my house if I was with someone. My doctor contacted medical services and sorted everything out for me...or so I thought. You can imagine my surprise when I got a letter from BO asking why I did not attend the medical. My GP has now sent a third letter and there does not seem to be any progress being made. I am worried about the impact on my benefits. I would like to know if anyone else has come across something similar and what the outcome was? There must be other people in a similar position to me.  
Terragramsam

The medical examination will usually take place at one of the Medical Examination Centres (MECs) near where you live. However, if you're unfit to travel, or you live more than 90 minutes from the nearest centre, the doctor may visit you at home. You will be given notice of your appointment and the chance to change it if the time doesn't suit you. It's very important to attend your medical examination as your benefit may be affected if you don't. If for any reason you can't attend, you should contact the MEC beforehand and arrange another appointment.  
Lin

Have your say and join others chatting at [www.disabilitynow.org.uk](http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk)



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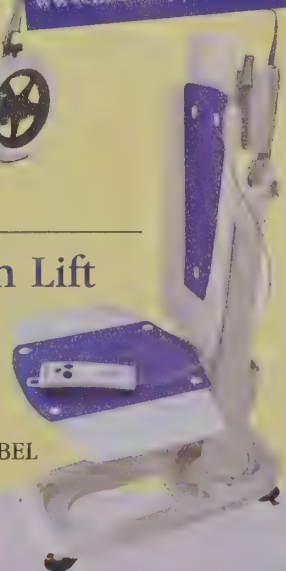
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# Head to head



Bert Massie asks Trevor Phillips – the newly appointed head of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights – how he will ensure the success of the merged equalities body

**Q** Why were you critical of the original proposals for the CEHR, set out in *Fairness for All*? What has changed in the last two years?

**A** The original proposal lacked independence, a clear purpose and resources. Now, following a lot of time and energy from all the commissions and government departments, the CEHR has a stronger framework, independence from government and vested interests, and will be able to make real changes for all. More remains to be done but the CEHR plans have progressed well.

**Q** What attracted you to the job of CEHR chair?

**A** All my working life has been committed to fighting inequality. Following all the work by people at all of the equality commissions, the body should be independent, authoritative and influential.

There is a basis for an extremely credible mission for this body. I could have returned to the private sector, but that would not have done justice to all the experiences I have been lucky enough to have.

I want the new commission to address equality and human rights at the level of the individual, the community, and society as a whole – to forge a Britain that is at ease with all aspects of its diversity, where people are treated equally, with a healthy human rights culture.

No person can claim to be an expert on all of the areas – this job will be an opportunity for me to develop new ideas and encourage people to think beyond their own experiences.

**Q** Merging the three equalities bodies into one is a huge undertaking. How long do you think it will take the CEHR to bed in?

**A** It is a major challenge and I will need the support of the existing commissions to achieve this goal.

People will want to see outcomes and change quickly and we have to live up to the hype. That's why we are working to get the best team possible in place as quickly as possible.

Work is well underway with the appointment of commissioners and the CEO. Work is also progressing with organisational design and we

are set to expand staff numbers at CEHR with secondments from the existing commissions. Don't forget that we start from a great platform, with the Disability Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality doing a lot of excellent work already.

**Q** In the long-term and in the light of specific criticisms from black and minority ethnic groups, what are the main challenges?

**A** We would not have got to where we are today without the hard work and sacrifice of activists – across all the equality strands – who have been willing to kick-start change whatever the cost.

The role of grassroots groups and stakeholders has always been critical, to offer a reality check for policymakers and for us all.

But we need to acknowledge that the discrimination and equality landscape is changing. With race, it's no longer a black versus white issue; Britain is ever more diverse, and much harm is done by covert and institutional racism these days.

With these changes, one of our biggest challenges will be

to find new ways of overturning the persistent inequalities. It is time for an open and honest debate about how we can all live together.

**Q** Are you confident the CEHR will be able to give equal weight to the various equality strands?

**A** This is not about which issue or strand is more important. To really tackle inequality within this country, we have to look at the bigger picture, and not treat each issue in isolation. It is about making life better for everyone.

**Q** How did it feel to be accused of pursuing right-wing policies that would not disgrace the BNP?

**A** People are entitled to their own opinions and some within the race equality field have strong views which have been challenged by my new thinking.

I was disappointed to hear the London mayor's thoughts, especially because Ken Livingstone worked really hard in the 1980s to make Britain recognise diversity. It is a shame he fails to recognise the important work done by the CRE.

**Q** How long will it take for the CEHR to command the same level of affection as the DRC currently enjoys?

**A** You guys have had a few years to hone your skills. However, I am determined the CEHR will inherit and push forward the best of its predecessors. I want to build on the expertise we already have and it will be enriched by the contributions of the new equality strands. This won't be a competition, nor is it about making friends; this is about changing things for the better for everyone, as quickly as possible.

**Q** How do you see the relationship developing between the CEHR and the government's recently established Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)?

**A** At the CRE, we have never been afraid to take on central government. The relationship between the new commission and central government was one of the concerns I had when we discussed the merger two years ago.

However, we should welcome the DCLG and appointment of Ruth Kelly as the secretary of state. This is a concrete example of the government's commitment

to equalities.

The department's creation of its Commission for Integration and Cohesion has significant echoes of what the CRE was calling for during the development of the CEHR – a body that would, independently, focus on grassroots work on equality and diversity.

It represents Ruth Kelly's boldness in tackling issues of community cohesion and early indications suggest it will tackle the issues we have raised around achieving an integrated society.

**Q** Are you confident the transition team will enable the new body to be up and running by October 2007?

**A** As I said before, the team has achieved a great deal so far and we are building on this. It'll be a joint effort from the whole equalities family – we are getting on with it.

We expect to have appointed a CEO within the next three months and work is progressing with organisational design. I feel confident that we will be open for business in October 2007.

**Q** You recently spoke about expanding the role of the steering group in order to give it more authority. How do you intend to achieve this?

**A** I met the steering group recently and asked for advice. The CEHR will have to be porous – capable of taking on board the views and ideas of a very wide range of groups; and to build partnerships for delivery. The CEHR will not be able to do everything – it has to lever change strategically and work with others. Over time, we will develop ways of working with other organisations which can deliver these types of relationships.

**Q** How many commissioners will the CEHR have?

**A** The board will have a minimum of ten and a maximum of 15 members, to include a commissioner each for Wales and Scotland and one who is, or has been, a disabled person.

In the first two years, there will also be transitional commissioners, appointed to represent the interests of the existing commissions.

I know that they will be distinguished folk, including, I understand, a bloke nominated by the DRC called Massie. What's your view of him?



# Embracing our differences for equality



All together now: Disabled, ethnic minority, gay and lesbian people, and others, are to be represented by a single equality body, but will they be equal?

Does the success of the forthcoming single equalities commission depend on embracing the agenda of diversity and difference? Bert Massie comments

When asking whether the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) can deliver on promises to adequately represent the interests of disabled people, we must consider the looming credibility gap among the groups the commission will serve.

The CEHR project has been dogged by a lack of support among grassroots groups and this could damage the single equality body's long-term effectiveness unless the underlying causes are addressed.

Why is the new body's imminent arrival being treated with such disdain by disability groups?

I challenge anyone to find a grassroots movement clamouring for a single equality body. Instead, grassroots groups have been largely conscripts to the entire process. At various stages, they have threatened to strangle it at conception or at birth.

I lay the blame firmly at the door of the current cultural trend that favours insularity over difference. It is essential to recognise differences between disabled and non-disabled people as a major component of a democratic society. Yet it seems any celebration of difference looks like bad news for a political class that is increasingly ditching multiculturalism and nailing its colours to the mast of a common culture based on values assumed to be British.

This trend could easily continue with the CEHR as, out of the three current commissions that will be merged next year, it is only the Disability Discrimination Act that recognises differences between people. Neither the Race Relations Act nor the Sex Discrimination Act have any need to, as men and women, black and white, are seen as two sides of the same coins.

The CEHR must help stem the trend and protect the interests of disabled people by championing a society that celebrates difference and diversity and rejects the move towards cultural uniformity.

The failure to recognise diversity is at the root of disabled groups' discontent with the CEHR. Equality is not about symmetrical processes and results but something far more valuable and elusive - being allowed to feel you count because you have a worthwhile part to play and a realistic chance of playing it. Yet the danger is that disabled people will not count unless their specific needs are adequately addressed and this chance could be lost in an obsession

with due process.

There is a growing view that the government has failed to join the dots during the planning of the CEHR and, as a result, disabled people are increasingly confused by what it is all going to mean for them in practice.

Academics involved in development of the CEHR have

**'Disability rights must play a pivotal and vitalising part in the new body'**

discussed four different equality models. First and most familiar is the individual justice model, with its emphasis on redress for individual victims of irrational prejudice and disadvantage.

Second is the group justice model, which recognises that instances of discrimination are embedded in social practices and institutions and that entire groups of people share a

common fate of social disadvantage. The keyword here is redistribution - the need for redistribution of social goods and benefits.

Third is the identity model, which recognises the cultural dimension of disadvantage - that cultural exclusion can be remedied by celebrating diversity and difference.

Fourth is the participatory model, emphasising that full social and civic inclusion is key to achieving equality - the rather Olympian notion that it is the taking part that really counts.

All these models are important, but the link between redistribution and participation will most firmly ground the government's vision of a human rights culture that can lead to true equality. The CEHR needs to firmly grasp this nettle.

To this end, I challenge the CEHR leadership to ensure all new appointments are real representatives of marginalised

people instead of the usual suspects. New commissioners should not just be representatives of special interest groups, but insiders that can say legitimately that they are real representatives of marginalised people.

The distinctiveness of disability rights must play a pivotal and vitalising part in the new body, otherwise it will exist on the margins of political debate and disabled people's life chances will be adversely affected. We must have commissioners who understand the nuances of grassroots movements and have the ability to translate this into authoritative action. Without them, the relevance of the CEHR will soon be lost and its actions may be viewed as acts of betrayal.

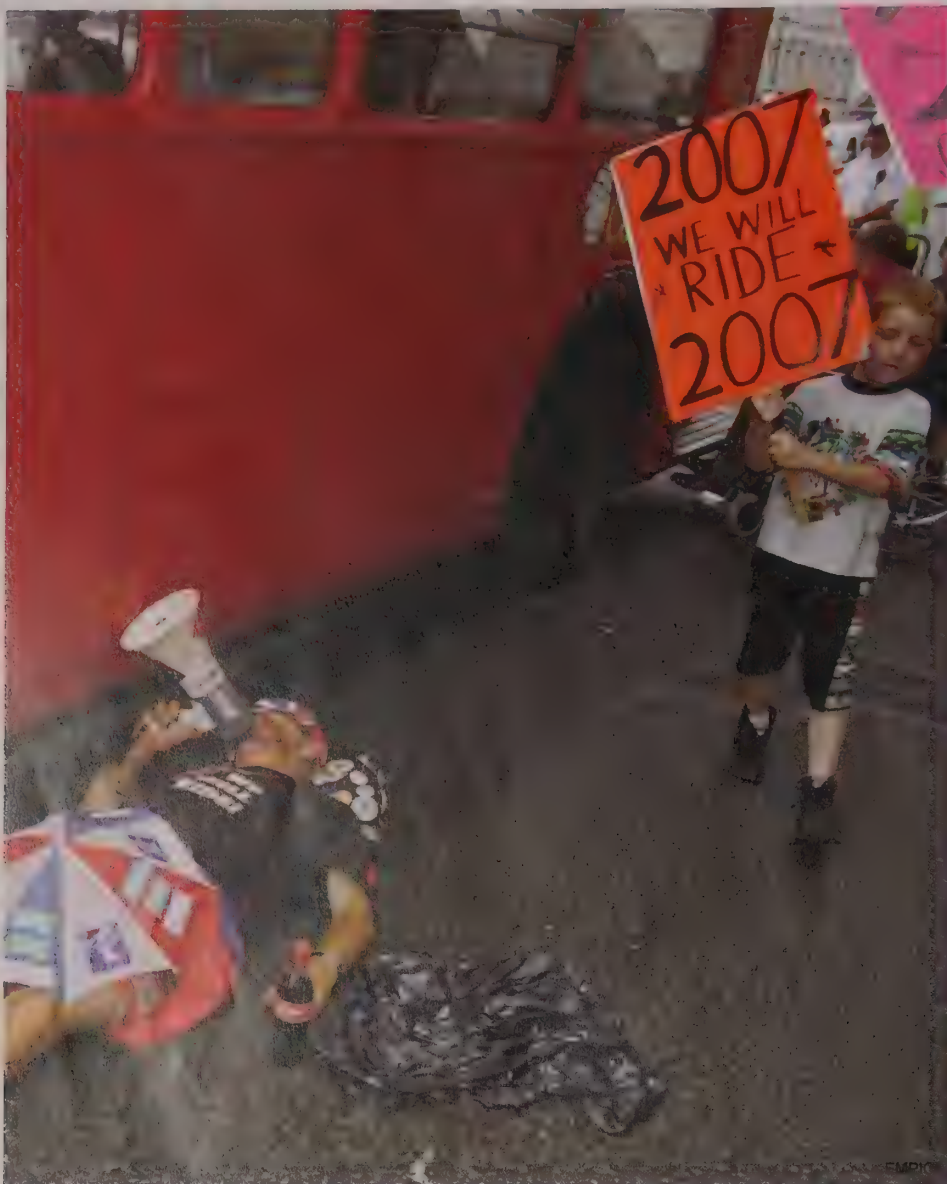
Disabled people and other groups need and deserve the best and that is what the CEHR must deliver.

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Then and now: Activists once chained themselves to buses (left); is the calmer approach in Westminster (right) the key to recruiting today's and tomorrow's campaigners?

# The evolution of **YOUTH** protest

Campaigners say the apathy of young disabled people is in sharp contrast to the veteran activists who chained and blockaded in the pursuit of equality. Elizabeth Choppin looks at the impact the iPod generation could have on the disabled people's movement

**M**ost people would agree that society's increasing recognition of the need for equality for disabled people is down to the blood, sweat and tears of campaigners – usually disabled people who have faced barriers in their own lives.

Thanks to them, there is widespread acceptance of the social model of disability, moves towards inclusive education, useful legislation in place such as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and rights for disabled people across the world through the forthcoming UN convention on the rights of disabled people.

But there are countless battles to be won. Despite campaigning, policies and attitudinal changes, further rights are needed to establish independent living, guarantee the right to life and to end discrimination in the workplace – to name a few.

But there are questions over who will take on such battles.

Is the younger, iPod

generation of disabled people passionate or informed enough to carry on the fight? Are they bothered? If not, what is at stake?

Performer Mat Fraser, who wrote and starred in last year's satire *Thalidomide!! The Musical*, says young people are too busy watching reality television or "the inanities of the mediocre" to kick up a fuss.

Despite his opinion that young people "spend more time doing nothing" than generations past, he feels that there is potential to get the disability voice heard.

He says: "How many wheelchair users watched *Big Brother (BB)* and thought 'I want to be on that show' but then saw the big staircase? And how many of them wrote to *BB* to complain?"

He adds: "They think the work is done – but ha, ha, ha – wait until they try to get a job."

"Young disabled people expect to get more, which is good, but they need to keep fighting for it. Don't expect

someone to change it for you."

Part of the difference, Mr Fraser says, is there is no obvious network of activism for young disabled people to tap into like there was in the 1970s and 1980s, when protesting was more common throughout society.

**'Young disabled people expect to get more, but they need to keep fighting for it'**

"It is more difficult for an individual to find their strength in numbers, but perhaps it is a sign of changes in society."

While inspired by young disabled people he meets, he worries they aren't prepared to fight for their rights, perhaps because they are turned off by what they see as "militancy".

Andy Rickell, Scope's executive director for diversity, politics and planning and former chief executive of the British Council of Disabled People, says campaigners must

stick to their principles.

"Ultimately, you do have to negotiate," he says, "but what you should not be prepared to do is compromise about the end result".

There is as much reason to campaign now as there has ever been, he adds.

The most pressing issues are independent living, which is being threatened by local authorities tightening eligibility criteria for support services, and the government's welfare reform proposals.

He suggests disabled people's organisations have responsibilities to make young disabled people aware of such issues and involve them in campaigning, by developing well-organised, well-funded programmes for young disabled people that investigate new ways of participation.

Tara Flood, director for the Alliance of Inclusive Education, says young people she speaks to are more involved in "mainstream campaigns" rather than disability rights issues.

She suggests that one problem might be that young people, including disabled people, are not taught disabled people's history at school.

Particularly pressing for her is the battle for truly inclusive education, which is "far from

won", as well as work on securing true equality for disabled people.

Ms Flood adds: "We need to engage the issues that are different for this generation."

"One of the biggest ongoing battles is the threat to our right to life – at the end, the beginning, or before we are born."

She also feels the UN convention will create a "new wave" of campaigners who will want to see it implemented.

Jim MacLeod, general secretary of Inclusion Scotland, says apathy might be down to the internet. With its e-petitions and immediate information, it has helped to do away with the demonstrations and getting disabled people "out and about".

"There is a level of apathy now – not just with disabled people – but generally in society," he says.

Like Tara Flood and many established campaigners, he says certain rights for disabled people are far from secure.

"Fuel poverty is going to hit hard this year," he warns. "The energy companies are going to hike their prices up again and that is going to have a profound effect on us."

Mr MacLeod also feels the DDA has failed to improve many rights for disabled people and





## Young people are just less political

Although I grew up aware of disability issues, I have to admit I have never been much of a campaigner.

I think that part of the problem is that young people generally are less political than they were in the past.

I get the impression that my parents spent the 80s chaining themselves to things and wearing CND badges, whereas me and many of my friends are not as involved in the political movement as we perhaps should be.

It is not difficult to see that society still has a long way to go towards equality for disabled people and part of me feels guilty that I am not playing a more active role in the movement and bringing about the necessary change.

As a young person, it can be difficult to relate to old-school, hardline campaigners, but I am conscious that, were it not for the efforts of previous generations of disabled people, my life would not be as it is today. Some minds may still be closed, but I have grown up feeling that the worlds of work and higher education were open to me as a disabled person.

I believe the equality of disabled people should be an assumption, not an issue. Campaigning is of course vital, but one of the ways in which this can be achieved is in fully exploiting the opportunities available – in forcing people to recognise that disability is not a barrier or a tragedy, but an aspect of life.

Ivy Broadhead, 18, editorial assistant



## The main problem is apathy

I consider myself to be a campaigner in some ways.

Some of my campaigning has been for personal gain – to get better access in my school and to be allowed to have an electric wheelchair.

In Pembrokeshire, we have a youth forum for young disabled people called Young Voices for Choices, of which I am a member, and this is my main outlet.

In 2003, several of us took part in Rights Into Action – an international congress of disabled people.

As a journalist, I would like to think that some of what I write could have an effect.

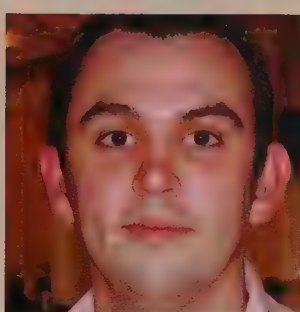
My role model in life has always been Tanni Grey Thompson. She is becoming more of a campaigner as she leaves sport behind and this inspires me.

I think there are young people like myself who are willing and generally want to make things better.

My problem is, after a while, I start to get apathetic. There are only so many consultations I can do before questioning why I take part if something fails yet again.

A lot of it has been left to gather dust, so we're not getting our say.

Jessica Sutton, 21, journalism graduate



## Campaigning can make a difference

Campaigning isn't always about grand changes. The National Union of Students (NUS) has supported several students in campaigning for accessible loos in their colleges and universities. And it worked.

Across the UK, institutions upgraded their facilities – shamed into admitting that their loos were inaccessible and not fit for purpose.

The disability community has the potential to come together and effect real change in our lives. From the simple things – signing petitions, sending emails, donating to an organisation we care about – to the more dramatic things – attending demonstrations, going to see our MP, starting a community campaigning group.

I'm a campaigner because I've seen real difference achieved. I've seen young disabled people attend university and graduate as a direct result of campaigners. I've seen shops, nightclubs and bars become accessible. I've seen disabled people lifted out of poverty and into work.

Unity is our strength. In campaigning, we achieve so much more uniting together on what matters. We can achieve real change, if we make the effort.

Alex Kemp, 26, disability officer, NUS



## Not as angry but just as fierce

I grew up campaigning for disabled people in many ways. From being part of rent-a-disabled-kid crowd so I could turn up to our local council meeting in an attempt to close my special school, to joining the youth group of the Alliance for Inclusive Education at 12.

Now I find myself as one of the main campaigners in the communication aids world (government funding ended in April).

We are getting there with the DDA, but we have a way to go to make the world a place where all disabled people are heard and have equal rights.

I was talking to an older disabled person recently who said younger campaigners aren't as angry as her generation. I must agree because, believe it or not, older people had it even worse.

However, in my tiny communication aids world, the generation who will set the world on fire is still at school.

Kate Caryer, 22, student

## We can change the world slowly

I volunteer for an organisation called Me2, which is a project aiming for the inclusion of all disabled people. We do this by inspecting various places in Dudley, such as leisure centres, youth clubs, schools and other organisations. If they meet all of our requirements, we then issue them with the Me2 award.

As a young disabled adult facing daily struggles with access. I am very passionate about trying to change things.

I want to go everywhere a non-disabled person can without having to phone up first and find out if it is accessible.

People don't seem to realise that I want to experience the same things as everyone else, such as socialising, going abroad, concerts, theatre and general everyday things.

I realise this isn't going to happen overnight. It might take a while, but slowly we are making a difference and are making people aware that we should have equal rights.

My hope is that every region in this country has Me2 or something similar so disabled people can campaign for what they strongly believe in, as there are very few organisations in this country campaigning for disabled people's rights.

Nicole Bashford, 18, volunteer



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# Time to drop the 'disabled' label?

Following on from the Influence List in *DN*'s August issue, Agnes Fletcher examines how the debate around definitions of disability relates to the modern sense of being disabled

There have been lists of the most powerful women, gay men and lesbians, black and minority ethnic Britons in the media for some time. Yet the concept of disabled influencers, which *DN* established with its Influence List (*DN* August, page 23), raises questions of definition and identity. For those of us on the panel choosing the list, the debate was not just about types and impact of influence, but the very idea of being a disabled Briton.

Panel members differed on how to define "disabled" in this context: all those who meet the current definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act; only those with a significant level of impairment; or only people who embraced a "disabled" identity from a rights perspective.

There was heated debate over the possible inclusion of chancellor Gordon Brown, who is blind in one eye and requires information in large print. Some wanted to exclude him because he does not identify

himself as "disabled", others because they did not believe that he is "disabled enough", others because they believed he had not faced discrimination.

When I first found out about the disability movement 14 years ago, there was a very clear boundary between who was a "disabled person" and who was not. Activists placed themselves on one side of what seemed like a clear line in the sand. There was an emphasis on differentiating impairment from "being ill." You just could not be "a person with a disability" – unless you were Irish, American or Canadian.

Allies were important – but were there to support, not to speak. Talk of the particulars of impairment was frowned upon. If you had an impairment but did not embrace your "disabled" identity, you were letting others down.

Such unwritten rules shored up an important sense of solidarity badged "disabled by society," and common purpose – at a time when progress on civil rights was so slow.

Undoubtedly, they were part of what created the Disability Discrimination Act and later amendments.

I, like many, found the social model of disability on which they drew, both politically inspiring and personally liberating: you were "in" after years of being "out". But where is identity politics now, and how can disability organisations ensure that they represent different experiences and accommodate different ways of thinking about disability?

Research from the Department for Work and Pensions shows that around half of those covered by the DDA do not consider themselves to be "disabled people" and DRC research found many people meeting the definition actively rejected the term, especially young people.

We should not drop the idea of disability – but there may be different, less exclusive, ways of ensuring that people know who you are talking to and what about. So, the DRC has explored terms such as "people who are disabled or have long-term health conditions", "people with rights under the DDA" and "people/families affected by disability or long-term health conditions" – the latter reflecting that being the parent, partner or child of a disabled person can also affect your life chances.

Through our emerging Disability Agenda for the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR), government and others, we have positioned disability equality as a way of tackling some of the major public policy challenges today – of demographic change and the "care crisis", of child poverty and of wasted potential because of an unskilled and underused workforce. We have tried to demonstrate the broader impact of social justice for disabled people.

Part of this approach is demonstrating that change is possible, acknowledging individual achievements and contribution. Not all of us will be a Gordon Brown or David Blunkett – achievement comes in many forms – but we are in a



Today's influence list: (From top left, clockwise) Gordon Brown; Frank Gardener; Stephen Hawking; Jane Campbell; Jack Ashley; and Rachel Hurst

catch-22 if every time we hear about success, we decide the person concerned cannot "really" be disabled, has not sufficiently embraced their "disabled" identity or has not faced sufficient disadvantage to count.

Public life has mostly seen people forced to hide health and disability issues – JFK with his back condition, Churchill's depression, or Tony Blair's "heart scare", which meant double duty at the gym to prove his fitness.

autism will differ from those of an 85-year-old Bangladeshi man with arthritis living in an institution or an HIV-positive parent of African descent. Our respect for them, support for their needs and celebration of their achievements should not depend on the specifics or the severity of impairment – or their embracing of any label. They may be unwilling or unable to unite around a single disability identity.

The time is coming to acknowledge that of those ten million people who meet the definition of disability in the DDA, the variety among them – their gender, age, sexuality, parent or carer status and religious or ethnic background – is greater than their commonality. The prospect of converting them to a 'disabled/not disabled' worldview will be small; and their sense of disadvantage may be based on the perspective that whole families can be affected by the poverty and discrimination associated with disability.

Who knows, perhaps in a few years the most influential British disabled person will be Cameron's young son Ivan, who has cerebral palsy?

\* Agnes Fletcher is assistant director of communications for the Disability Rights Commission and was a member of the disabled panel that chose *DN*'s list of the UK's most influential disabled people.

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# Historical influence

DN's Influence List recognised disabled people who make a difference across the UK today and now Bert Massie details some of the people who have shaped the movement historically

**T**he publication of DN's influence list of disabled people was bound to be controversial. Everyone has a different idea of what influence is and who has it.

Influence changes and so do the people who have it. It was right to include a list of people seen as the mothers and fathers of the disabled people's movement – those who have made contributions to the UK disability movement in the past.

On looking at the list, I was struck by how many names did not appear, some of whom had died. It could be argued that dead people have no influence, but Karl Marx had huge influence long after his death and so have many others.

So, what about the disabled people who contributed so much but now take a less obvious role and those who are dead?

## Megan du Boisson

The current debate about Incapacity Benefit reminds me of the days when there were no financial benefits for disabled

people. In 1965, Megan du Boisson set up the Disablement Income Group (DIG) as an organisation of disabled people. Its first campaign was to win a non-contributory benefit for disabled housewives. Megan died in a road accident in 1969, but had already started the ball rolling for disability benefits.

## Mary Greaves

A later chair of DIG was Mary Greaves, whose parliamentary skills assisted Alf (now Lord) Morris in getting the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (CSDPA) on the statute book in 1970. That act introduced the orange (now blue) badge scheme. It gave disabled people rights to social care provision, although a series of governments have diluted those rights so much that many no longer exist.

## Denny Denly

The CSDPA was also the first law that referred to access to buildings. That was as a result

of the work of Denny Denly, who in the mid-1960s was the country's only access officer.

## Duncan Guthrie

Ok, he was not disabled, but the late Duncan Guthrie (*pictured bottom right*), was a major force behind the CSDPA when he was the director of the Central Council for the Disabled as the parent of a disabled daughter.

## Paul Hunt

One of the distant founders of the disabled person's movement, who we must not forget, was Paul Hunt (*pictured top left*). He rebelled against disabled people being forced to live in institutions.

## Peter Large

Entering the scene in the 1970s, the late Peter Large (*pictured top right*) was responsible for persuading the government to introduce what was then known as the Mobility Allowance. Without it, over 425,000 disabled people today would not have a car through the Motability



scheme. He was also the major player in having building regulations changed in 1985 so that new buildings had to be accessible to disabled people; the results are around for all to see. He also chaired the committee whose report eventually led to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in 1995.

## Stephen Bradshaw

One of the first disabled chief executives of a major charity was Stephen Bradshaw (*pictured below left*), who headed the

Spinal Injuries Association. He also chaired a group known as Voluntary Organisations Against Discrimination and this led to Rights Now and pressure for the DDA, even though stronger legislation was the goal.

These are a few of the people who would appear on my grandparents' list of those no longer in the public eye, but whose past influence has improved the lives of disabled people. No doubt DN readers can compile their own lists.



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# Breast cancer battle extends to the workplace

Women with breast cancer not only battle for their health, they face discrimination in the workforce despite a law change designed to protect them, the Disability Rights Commission reveals



Imagine how you would feel if you had just come out of hospital after major surgery and, just when you thought the worst was over, you lose your job because of an employer's discrimination.

Hazel Miller, 49, a care assistant in a residential home, expected to return to work after having time off for breast cancer treatment.

She missed her colleagues and had been hit financially by the enforced absence. But on the morning she was due to go

back, the manager contacted Mrs Miller and said the home did not think it was a good idea for her to return to work. She was asked to resign and received her P45 in the post shortly after.

Mrs Miller, from Arbroath in Scotland, says: "I had worked myself up for going back after a long time off and my confidence took a tumble. Last year was terrible and going back to work is part of the healing process."

She says she kept her employers informed about

everything that was happening and there was never any mention that she was going to be dismissed.

"They never gave me a chance to go and prove myself. I do feel they did me wrong."

Mrs Miller took advice from the Disability Rights Commission's (DRC) helpline and decided to take her case to a tribunal, which she won and her former employers were forced to make a settlement.

Unfortunately, her case is not exceptional. Despite an amendment to the Disability

Discrimination Act (DDA) in December 2005 – which protected workers with cancer from unfair treatment from the point of diagnosis – the DRC helpline has taken, on average, two calls a week from women with breast cancer who have faced difficulties at work because of their condition.

One woman, who worked for a major high street retailer, was dismissed when she was unable to give a specific returning date after her radiotherapy treatment finished.

Another woman, who worked for a security firm for 19 years, was told she was a "bad investment" because she needed more time off for reconstructive surgery. And a woman who had a mastectomy was told that time off because of illness was a disciplinary matter and anyone having more than four sickness periods a year would be dismissed.

Complaints to the helpline have revealed that people with other forms of cancer are also facing discrimination at work. There have been 103 calls since the legal changes, of which 82 per cent of callers said their employers failed to make reasonable adjustments that would keep them in work.

Nearly one in five callers said they had been dismissed. A further 13 per cent said they

were facing dismissal and nearly six per cent disciplinary action.

Under the DDA, it is unlawful for employers to treat a disabled person or a person with a long-term health condition unfairly because of their disability.

Employers are also required to make reasonable adjustments, which includes providing additional support that enables a disabled employee to carry out his or her work. For workers with cancer, reasonable adjustments may include flexible working hours and time off for medical treatment.

Despite law changes to protect people with cancer, many employers still have not got the message.

Direct discrimination and failures to make adjustments are turning the world of work into a very hostile environment for workers with these disabilities.

We cannot tolerate people with cancer and long-term health conditions being prevented from making their contribution to the workplace.

There are many employers who are meeting their duties under the law and demonstrating good practice and many disabled people playing their part in successful organisations.

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GEORGE OLNEY



The merger that created Mobilise has been a long and difficult process, with many members losing faith along the way. Motoring correspondent Helen Smith investigates how the organisation can win back support

It's been nearly a year since The Disabled Drivers' Association (DDA) and the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club (DDMC) merged to form Mobilise. The merger was fraught with obstacles and disagreement, which continued after the paperwork was signed.

Within months of her appointment, chief executive Pamela Morrissey left without explanation and no replacement has been found yet. At least elections were held at around the same time to appoint a new board of trustees.

Over 1,000 members voted, electing a board of 13 people. Of these, four were previously on the board of the DDMC and nine were on the board of the DDA. This imbalance led to accusations of a DDA take-over, a claim disputed by Mobilise chairman, and former DDA chair, Douglas Campbell (pictured), who insists the postal election was democratic.

"There were previously around 25 people on the two boards and only 13 on the new board so there were bound to be people who would not get elected."

However, it does not help that Mobilise is run from the former DDA office in Norfolk and not DDMC's office in Northamptonshire, which has now been closed.

Mobilise claims it was a cost-effective option and all former DDMC staff were offered the chance to move – but none did.

Members of Mobilise have also expressed concerns over the quality of the new merged magazine *No Limits*.

Mr Campbell says: "I am truly disappointed that our first attempt was so disastrously poor and continued little of the excellent work done by *Disabled Motorist* and *Magic Carpet*."

*No Limits* has been scrapped and a new magazine was due to be launched as *DN* went to press. It will have an entirely

new staff and different editorial approach.

Mobilise will also launch a series of campaigns including road pricing, parking at healthcare facilities, unattended petrol stations and improvements to the blue badge scheme.

One campaign that has dropped off the radar is Baywatch, which highlights the difficulties disabled people have parking at their local supermarket. The campaign – run in partnership with *DN* and the British Polio Fellowship – needs new ideas if progress is to be made says Mr Campbell.

Blue badges (BB) are higher on the agenda. Mr Campbell says Mobilise wants to sort out the issuing process and see it centralised.

"It is time the Department for

Transport got on with the job of providing clear and concise guidance to issuing authorities and ran training courses for the staff in those authorities."

He believes that the reason people abuse disabled bays is because there is no effective deterrent.

"Where disabled bays are properly enforced there is little abuse of them. In Milton Keynes it is rare to find a car parked in a disabled bay without a badge, because people know the parking attendants will issue a penalty charge notice every time."

In September, parking wardens were given the power to inspect BBs, something the DDA had campaigned 15 years for. But Mr Campbell says disabled people are not exempt



from the penalties for BB fraud.

"Some disabled people lend their badges to relatives, this is illegal and could result in a £1,000 fine, parking penalties, the car being seized or the BB being withdrawn."

Mobilise also plans to tackle the issue of petrol station access after receiving complaints from disabled drivers who do not get assistance or cannot use their chip and PIN card.

Mr Campbell says: "It should be possible to solve these problems under the Disability Discrimination Act, but doing so is far from easy. When we contact the owners of petrol stations, they rarely reply in a helpful manner."

He believes it is an issue that Mobilise and the DRC could work together on.

Not all members are convinced by the promise of new campaigns and magazines. One such person is ex-DDMC member Pat Harvey, from

Cromer, who has not renewed her membership.

She says: "Mobilise appears to have no direction and no new initiatives."

So can Mobilise get back on track and win back disillusioned members? Mr Campbell thinks they can. He admits that some members left during the upheaval but is sure that many will come back when they see what Mobilise has to offer. The emphasis of the charity will now be on mobility by car, van, scooter and wheelchair.

Although membership figures have dropped, there are still 21,000 members, making Mobilise one of the largest organisations of disabled people in Europe. Unfortunately, it is not attracting younger disabled motorists, a problem Mr Campbell says is common to many disabled charities.

"It is not surprising that younger people reject membership of disability organisations. We spend too much of our time and energy on trying to save our old ways when they are no longer relevant. Our magazines and newsletters are full of obituaries and grumbles."

He hopes this will change when Mobilise begins influencing policy makers rather than reacting to legislation that is already in place.

Mobilise have sailed through bumpy waters with a fairly healthy membership, but only time will tell whether the organisation can last the distance.

• For more information or to join Mobilise, tel: 01508 489 449 or visit: [www.mobilise.info](http://www.mobilise.info)

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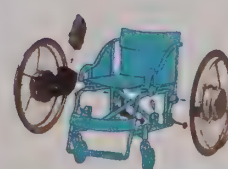


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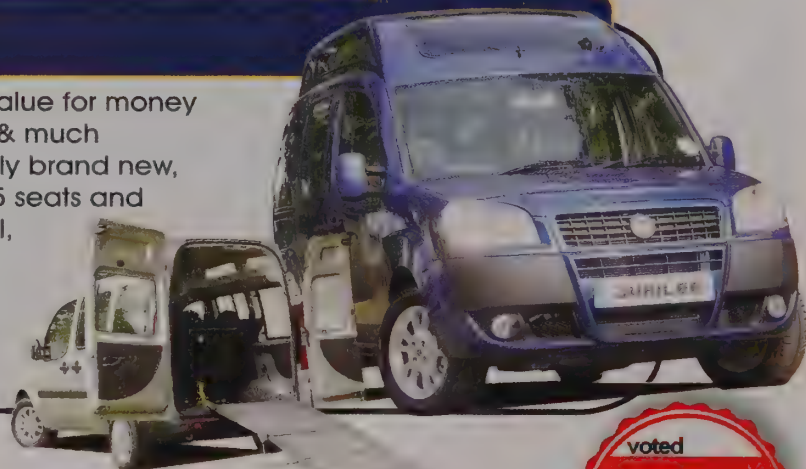


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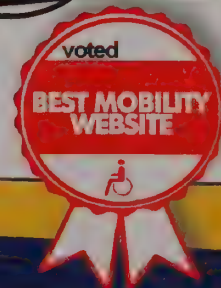
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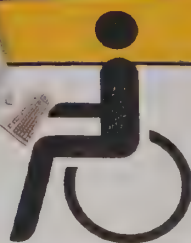
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## TV

The recent arrival of baby Petal, who has Down's Syndrome (DS), in Albert Square, has provided *EastEnders* writers with a controversial new storyline, as parents Honey and Billy Mitchell (pictured right with Petal) struggle to come to terms with the news.

Whilst admitting that there has been some negative feedback from older people with DS, executive producer of the show Kate Harwood, maintains that families with young DS children have seen

their own experiences reflected in the dialogue.

Ms Harwood says that, though challenging for some, Honey's initial refusal to accept her child was supported by their research, and urges viewers to trust that the story is going "in a truthful direction".

The Down's Syndrome Association, which has been working with BBC researchers in developing plotlines, says that while "some scenes may make uncomfortable viewing, for people with DS and their families...we are confident that



the soap's intentions are good."

Sarah Gordy, an actress with DS, was one of the viewers angered by the way in which writers have dealt with the issue.

She says: "When I first saw it, they acted badly. I thought, that poor kid."

Her mother Jane sees the introduction of a character with DS as a positive step, although she has concerns about the negative emphasis. She says: "There are a lot of successful people [with DS], living full lives...everyone seems to be reacting in

rather a sad way."

Although 96 per cent of adults surveyed think that having more disabled people on TV is a positive move\*, but the number of permanent disabled characters appearing on our screens is still far from representative.

In recent years, programmes like the BBC's *Beyond Boundaries* and *Big Brother* have raised the profile of disabled people (although they have received mixed feelings about their portrayal of disability) – but is it enough?

\*You Gov' survey by the Broadcasting & Creative Industries Disability Network

## Audio books



Those wishing to hear more about somebody who has made a major contribution to the lives of disabled people worldwide, will be fascinated by the well-researched biography of Sir John Wilson. During the second half of the 20th century



he – arguably – did more than anyone to prevent and cure blindness.

Despite being blinded in a school experiment at the age of 12, Sir John studied law at Oxford before joining the National Institute for the Blind. In the 1940s he took part in a government-sponsored tour of the African and Middle Eastern territories of the British Empire, investigating the problems of blindness. This resulted in the creation of the Royal

Commonwealth Society for the Blind – known as Sightsavers International today.

In *Blindness and the visionary* (published in print by Giles De La Mare with CD-ROM attached), we also learn that Sir John Wilson set up the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, as well as the organisation Impact, which tackles the universal challenge of avoidable disability.

Somebody else who has helped people in developing

countries is Sir Bob Geldof, whose reading of *Geldof in Africa* (BBC audio books) is thoroughly absorbing.

Equally enthralling is Niall Ferguson's analysis of recent international conflicts in *The War of the World* (Penguin).

This detailed account of the 20th century – possibly the most violent and terrifying time the world has ever known – has even greater impact thanks to Sean Barrett's authoritative narration.

Vidar Hjordeng

## What's on



## Theatre

Chickenshed's Christmas production, *Grimm Nights & Everafter Days*, a magical journey through Grimm's fairytales, runs 29 November until 13 January at the Rayne Theatre. The show incorporates dance, theatre, music and sign-language.

• Tickets between £10 and £17, tel: 020 8292 9222, [www.chickenshed.org.uk](http://www.chickenshed.org.uk)

## Festival

DaDaFest 6, a month-long celebration of some of the best the deaf and disabled arts scene has to offer, is coming to venues across the North West between 13 November and 12 December. Highlights include stand-up from Laurence Clark, music by The Heroes and signed singing from Caroline Parker, as well as plenty of new talent and inclusive club nights.

• For more information, tel: 0151 707 1733 or visit: [www.mvda.co.uk](http://www.mvda.co.uk)

For more whats on visit: [www.disabilitynow.org.uk](http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk)

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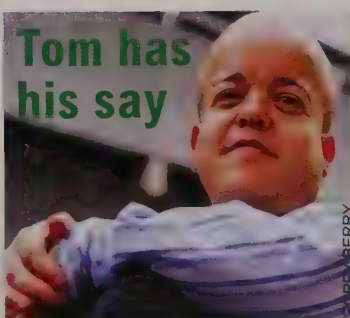
# Books



## Disability Rights And Wrongs Tom Shakespeare Routledge, £19.99

This book is sold as a rescue from the dead end to which the social model has led us. Bearing in mind the mass media notion that conflict sells, this book can be expected to gain a high profile. Tom Shakespeare has never been happy sitting on the fence and here he makes his position on the disabled people's movement and disability studies clear. He rejects the "dangerous polarisations" of medical and social models and disabled versus non-disabled people. He rejects the disabled people's movement's emphasis on "identity politics". He argues for more sympathetic understanding of bioethics, charity and care. That's where one of the limitations of this book emerges. It must be read in conjunction with the arguments and research it critiques and often condemns. The social model of

disability is not the crude construction of impairment versus oppression he sets out. He argues for a model of charity based on love; disabled people contest the reality that increasingly mimics big business. He argues for a feminist model of caring; the reality is imposed mutual dependence. Why isn't there more about black and minority ethnic disabled people, older disabled people, mental health service users and people who communicate differently – all groups who face particular exclusions? At the end of the book, Tom accepts that social barriers constitute the major problems for disabled people. He agrees that they should have choices and support to live in the community and agrees that the medicalisation of disability must be challenged. So what has the book been about? Wouldn't it be more helpful if Tom used his skills to critique the primary problems of a disabling society and defective disability policy and practice? Peter Beresford is a professor of social policy at Brunel University and a mental health service user.



Ideas and movements progress through open discussion and debate. Yet the disability movement relies on ideologies devised 30 years ago. In *Disability Rights and Wrongs*, I challenge rigid ideas such as the social model; if we are to progress in research and campaigning, we need to rethink assumptions. The Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), which devised the social model of disability, is regarded as the pioneer of the disability movement. Yet its insight that disability is about oppression, not just impairment, was not unique. I cite other academics, activists and policymakers who were also beginning to realise that social barriers played a causal role in disability, during the 1960s and 70s. Even in Britain, UPIAS was only one group among many promoting a disability

rights agenda, for example, the feminist-inspired Liberation Network of People with Disabilities. But the Leninist discipline of UPIAS triumphed over these more open, fluid approaches. British disability studies has closely allied to the disability movement and has failed to develop new thinking. It is quite clear that social factors – barriers, oppression, prejudice – do play the major role in the lives of disabled people. Yet many disabled people also experience impairment, pain and restriction, which contribute to their exclusion and difficulties. For example, the lower rate of employment among disabled people is largely due to the lack of education and training and the lack of confidence and ignorance and discrimination of employers. But another reason for exclusion from jobs is that some disabled people are unable to work, cannot work as much or can only do certain types of work. Removing barriers is not enough to liberate all disabled people or lift everyone out of poverty. Better benefits and more

extensive social support will be necessary to ensure disabled people do not continue to lose out. In the book, I argue against the rejection of charities – the larger organisations have now adopted disability rights thinking and give a voice to disabled people. I also argue in favour of assisted-suicide legislation – disabled people should have choices at the end as well as during life. Disability rights groups that oppose assisted suicide may be out of tune with the wider disability constituency which has expressed support for legal change in several surveys. I also discuss the vital role non-disabled people play in our lives. Such claims go against mainstream disability activism, but reflect many ordinary disabled people's views. My intention is not to offend, but to encourage a more open debate on political strategies and values. To understand the complexities of disability, we need good research evidence and better argument, not outdated ideologies. Tom Shakespeare is an academic and writer who lives in the north east of England.

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# Go Gadgtastic

This year's Independent Living exhibition had its usual display of useful products, but it was a bit of a trek getting there to see them. Bob Ross reports

The hilltop view from Alexandra Palace may have been wonderful, unlike getting between the disabled parking area and the main entrance of this year's Independent Living show. This is not the first time that Independent Living has had inaccessible areas and, as someone who uses crutches, walking the long distance was a difficult, uncomfortable and tiring exercise – organisers Emap take note. Still, once I reached the building, there were some interesting new products on show.

## COOL STOOL

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## PETITE POWER

**What?** A new powered wheelchair designed for younger children is the Bugzi. Designed and produced by MERU (Medical Engineering Resource Unit), the Bugzi is for small children aged between one and five years. The Bugzi has a robust moulded body shell and is compact and easily manoeuvrable. It is a fully functioning electric indoor wheelchair with rechargeable batteries and postural seating. It comes equipped with either a programmable joystick or push button controller, and can be operated by head, hand or foot. Each Bugzi is tailored to the need of the individual and seating and controls can be adjusted to suit children's changing abilities. **How much?** £2,995 **Where?** MERU, tel: 0208 770 8286, [www.bugzi.org.uk](http://www.bugzi.org.uk)



## COMFY CARRIER

**What?** Pdq – maker of the Powertrike – has teamed up with cycle manufacturer Always Co, to produce a modestly priced manual wheelchair – the Comphy wheelchair. Made of aircraft-grade aluminium, it incorporates many features generally only available with more expensive wheelchairs, such as variable positioning of the backrest, castor, leg strap and foot rests. This is a comfortable, fully adjustable, folding wheelchair, with a sleek look. **How much?** £495 **Where?** Pdq International Ltd, tel: 0800 389 7506, [www.alwaysmobility.co.uk](http://www.alwaysmobility.co.uk)



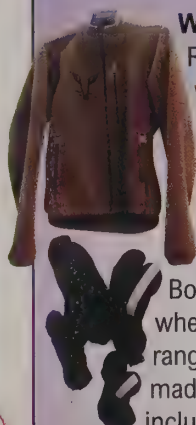
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**What?** Molten Rock – together with Volpine Adaptive – has produced a range of clothing suitable for use with the Boma and other wheelchairs. A range of custom-made outdoor wear includes overboots, jackets mittens and other items, which can be specially tailored to suit the individual. **How much?** Range above, between £50 and £65 **Where?** Molten Rock Equipment Ltd, tel: 01525 861 669, [www.moltenrock.co.uk](http://www.moltenrock.co.uk)



## HI-TEC LOCATOR

**What?** An interesting communication aid on display at the exhibition was the Sazo GPS (Global Positioning System) locator. The locator and mobile cellular safety device use GPS technology to provide a high level of emergency communication, particularly useful for people in isolated locations or those who need emergency assistance or information quickly. Using the Sazo GPS locator, anyone in Britain can be located to within ten to 15 metres from a mobile phone, using an internet-connected computer or mobile device. It can also be used as a mobile phone on most of the major mobile networks and pre-set phone numbers can be stored and easily selected. The Sazo locator also has a panic/SOS button that will send a message and location details to designated contacts until a response is received. The Sazo locator is extremely compact – about the size of a credit card and the width of a match box. **How much?** £99 (with contract) **Where?** Verify Location, tel: 0800 0870 999; [www.verifylocation.co.uk](http://www.verifylocation.co.uk)

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**Deborah Absalom**

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**Lorraine Peterson**

CEO, National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASSEN)

Following the announcement by HM Treasury and the Department of Education and Skills' of their joint review into the provision of services to disabled children and young people, this year's important Ofsted report into the education of children with disabilities and the Education and Skills Select Committee report on SEN released in July, this timely and relevant conference will provide an analysis of these key policy developments and their impact on service users and service providers.

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POLICYREVIEW  
Magazine

Bob Ross is a helpline  
manager for the Disabled  
Living Foundation





# Lifts go through the roof

Are stairlift prices heading through the roof or are they the cheapest way to stay mobile at home? John Pring investigates

**W**hat is a fair price for a new stairlift?

Most of the big players in the market are reluctant to offer quotes over the phone, as there are so many factors that affect the price, such as the shape of the staircase, positioning of the electricity supply and mobility of the disabled person.

But when pushed, most will suggest their lowest price for a new, basic, straight stairlift to be somewhere between £2,000 and £2,500. Prices for more advanced, curved stairlifts, with all the high-tec extras can reach £7,000.

But companies advertising on the internet are offering prices as low as £1,375 for a straight stairlift.

Alan Norton, director of Assist UK, which offers free advice on assistive technology, says he hears "some concerns" from disabled people about prices.

"Our [disabled living] centres will not go near [some of the

companies] because of the quality and after-sales as well as the price. It's a minefield," he says, although this applies to a range of equipment.

He accepts that firms face hefty costs and need to make "a fair profit" but adds: "If the government did an investigation into the price they would find some shocking results."

Mr Norton says there are "some really good companies that offer a really good service".

Bob Ross, helpline manager for the Disabled Living Foundation, also receives complaints. "Once something gets a label on it as being a piece of disability equipment then often the mark-up increases. We always advise people to shop around," he says.

David Yelding, director of Ricability, which publishes consumer information for disabled people, says: "Looking at the prices, stairlifts seem expensive. It would be good if manufacturers gave us more

information about what contributed to the price to allay people's suspicions."

So how do manufacturers and distributors respond?

Jon Stannah, managing director of Stannah Stairlifts, insists that stairlifts "generally offer the cheapest solution of all the possible options available", compared with moving house, going into care or adapting a home to living downstairs only.

Costs include site visits by trained engineers, installation costs and after-sales.

"We feel that £2,000 for a highly complex technological piece of equipment with an aftercare service which is second to none is actually relatively good value for money."

Clare Brophy, sales director of Companion Stairlifts, says its standard price of £2,150 is "very, very competitive" and prices haven't risen in the last ten years, but adds: "We are not a charity and obviously we are in business at the end of the day."

Companion does have an older "very, very basic" model for £1,100.

Lawrence Wright, managing director of Equilift, agrees that the UK market is "very competitive" and prices have fallen in real terms over the last ten years. French and German customers, he says, pay thousands of euros more than those in the UK. He says Equilift makes about £100 profit on each stairlift sold.

Ten years ago, there were about 15 main players in the market. Now, he says, there are probably 200 mobility shops,

manufacturers, distributors and individual franchise holders.

Jamie Coughlan, chief executive of Churchill's Stairlifts, also believes intense competition has kept prices low.

He says Churchill's Dutch parent company is developing a new stairlift that will sell for "significantly less" than £2,000. So it can be done.

Christian Dunnage, director of Dolphin Mobility, a distributor of stairlifts and mobility aids, agrees. Dolphin sells a basic straight stairlift for £1,400.

Mr Dunnage believes many companies, although not his, have to pass on the costs of expensive advertising campaigns in national newspapers, which can add £500 to £700 per sale.

He says staff from one manufacturer told him their stairlifts actually cost only £300 or £400 to make.

Meanwhile, he has come across people paying £4,000 for a straight stairlift, which he says is "immoral".

"Unfortunately, some people are out to make a quick buck. They are looking to get as much from each person (as possible)."

Indeed, DN has heard of one company quoting a potential customer £8,000 for a basic, straight stairlift.

So are there any solutions?

David Fazakerly, managing director of the Lift and Escalator Industry Association (LEIA), says his trade body is finalising a code of practice, which should be approved this year by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). Although the code focuses on quality and service, it also

"prohibits wheeling and dealing on prices". All his members, including most major stairlift manufacturers, will have to abide by the code.

The British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA) is also developing a code of practice, although, like the LEIA, it cannot discuss prices.

The OFT says the codes will help keep prices down.

And there are precautions that buyers can take themselves.

**'People paying £4,000 for a straight stairlift is immoral'**

Dolphin advises customers to obtain three or four quotes, and to try a stairlift before buying as "they do not suit everybody".

Assist UK says buyers must seek free, impartial advice, secure a full assessment of their needs, and try out a stairlift before they buy one.

Assist is developing a way for equipment complaints to be passed to the BHTA.

But Alan Norton believes more should be done including an in-depth investigation into equipment prices and new laws to protect customers.

But that is unlikely to happen soon. The OFT says it has not received any complaints that would "warrant us launching any kind of formal investigation" and believes there is no need for new laws to protect disabled customers from over-charging.



Rising to the occasion: a Stannah stairlift in action

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# Dear Rachel

● love and loneliness ● personal problems ● advice and support

Rachel Wilson, who is disabled herself, has spent many years advising on disability matters. Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or email your problem to [editor@disabilitynow.org.uk](mailto:editor@disabilitynow.org.uk)



## Some place like home

I am a wheelchair user and receive the full rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), but I am having trouble finding somewhere to live. Where do I look?

Jo, via email

You do not say whether you own your current house or not, but it is worth contacting both your local council and housing associations.

In making an assessment of your needs, both housing associations and councils will award you points according to your circumstances. This determines whether you are a priority for housing. A number of housing associations provide wheelchair-accessible housing; two of the largest are John Grooms Housing Association and Habinteg Housing Association. You may need to go on a waiting list, but if they are not able to help you, they can put you in touch with organisations that can.

● *John Grooms Housing Association*, tel: 0845 300 1551 or visit:

[www.johngrooms.org.uk](http://www.johngrooms.org.uk)

● *Habinteg Housing Association*, tel: 020 7822 8700, or visit: [www.habinteg.org.uk](http://www.habinteg.org.uk)

## Underwater dreams

I am on low-income disability benefits after losing my right arm and shoulder. I wish to go scuba diving, but to do this I need to do a course and buy the gear. I can't afford either. I would like to know if there are any charities who may help me, or if you have any ideas how I could raise the money.

Anthony, by email

I suggest you contact the Scuba Trust, a charity that promotes scuba diving for disabled people. Even if they cannot provide funding themselves, they would be well qualified to advise you. You could also try the British Sub Aqua Club (BSAC).

● *The Scuba Trust*, tel: 07985 025 385 or visit:

[www.scubatrust.org.uk](http://www.scubatrust.org.uk)

● *BSAC*, tel: 0151 350 6200 or visit: [www.bsac.com](http://www.bsac.com)

## Searching for a holiday

I am a 22-year-old wheelchair user and I am looking for an accessible holiday. Do you have any suggestions?

Stewart, Dundee

There are a number of organisations that cater for disabled holidaymakers. Vitalise operate holiday centres in the

UK and can provide care.

A comprehensive service is also offered by the information unit at Holiday Care, part of Tourism for All. They provide information on holiday accommodation across the country.

Each property is rated according to how accessible it is for a wheelchair user travelling independently, a wheelchair user requiring support, or whether the person needs to be more ambulant. They also have detailed accessibility information on Europe and the US.

● *Holiday Care*, tel: 0845 124 9971 or visit: [www.holidaycare.org.uk](http://www.holidaycare.org.uk)

● *Vitalise*: 0845 330 0149, [www.vitalise.org.uk](http://www.vitalise.org.uk)

## DLA and income

I have applied for DLA. Will this be paid as extra money, or will it be deducted from the income support or disability premium that I already receive?

Details withheld, Blackpool

Your eligibility for DLA is not connected to income, so it will be paid in addition to your current benefit. Your income is not taken into account when assessing your eligibility for

## Concerns over criteria

I have three children and my daughter was born with club feet – she is now three years old. She has had many operations but is still in a great deal of pain and cannot walk. We applied for a Disabled Facilities Grant to adapt our bathroom. Initially we were eligible, but a new assessment has been carried out and we have been told our daughter is not disabled – despite having received other specialist equipment and having a blue badge. We have taken independent advice and been told the same thing. We have been told that selling our house is the only solution, which we cannot afford to do. Can you suggest anything please?

Name withheld

You should contact your local council and ask them to explain the decision and the criteria they are using to judge whether your daughter is disabled.

You need to seek the support of the occupational therapist (OT) in understanding why this has happened and, if the therapist believes the decision is wrong, they will support you in getting the situation rectified. If the OT agrees with the assessment, they need to explain the decision fully.

I understand that you have taken third-party advice, but if you are still unhappy, try contacting the Disability Law Service and the Disability Rights Commission to ask their advice.

● *Disability Law Service*, tel: 020 7791 9800, *textphone*: 020 7791 9801 or visit: [www.dls.org.uk](http://www.dls.org.uk)

● *Disability Rights Commission*, *telephone*: 08457 622 633, *textphone*: 08457 622 644 or visit: [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

means-tested benefit and so it will not be deducted from your income support.

## I want the power

I am anxious to obtain any views on the use of power-packs attached to a manual wheelchair.

Stuart, by email

There are three types of power packs for manual wheelchairs. One attaches to the front of the wheelchair and effectively converts it into a handcycle.

The other attaches to the wheelchair's pushing handles and is designed to be used by someone pushing from behind.

The third type attaches to the wheelchair and is designed to be used by the wheelchair user.

There are a number of manufacturers and none of these options are cheap. So it is important that you choose carefully. It might be worth seeking the advice of your local occupational therapy bureau.

The independent living website provides information on a range of equipment, including power packs. You might also like to contact the Disabled Living Foundation (DLF).

● *DLF Helpline*, tel: 0845 130 9177, *textphone*: 020 7432 8009

● *Independent Living Website*, visit: [www.independentliving.co.uk](http://www.independentliving.co.uk)

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**Help at the end of the phone**

DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psycho-therapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882 111.



## ASK THE READERS

I belong to an online car forum. Some of the members use derogatory terms regarding disabled people. I have reported this to the moderators and they took the matter seriously at first, but they are now overlooking it. Is there anything I can do?

### Read the fine print

Using Google to find the forum, I checked out the forum rules, there is also a disclaimer – which you find on most forums. The rules state that either the moderators have to stop or ban the abusive or offensive people or they can supply you with the known contact details of the members in question, so you could chase them up via a solicitor if the abuse is aimed directly at you.

Internet abuse law is changing rapidly at the moment, but because the abuse is in a public forum you should chase it up with a solicitor. People can remain anonymous to some degree on a forum, but they do need a valid email address to register usually, so I am sure you will have some luck tracing them.

Gee

### Don't get mad

Some people do this sort of thing out of ignorance or to get a

rise out of someone.

Setting aside any etiquette, there are three approaches you can take: leave the forum; ignore the abuse; or get in with some cutting witty lines and take the fun out of it for them.

Complaining or making your offence known is more likely to add fuel to the fire.

Luna

### Get out of it

I doubt if you will get very far complaining however this should not be the case, but ask yourself why you want to share a forum with these kind of people?

Liz Williams

### NEXT MONTH'S QUESTION:

"I've just been diagnosed with severe narcolepsy. Does anyone know of support groups for people with narcolepsy I can contact?"

Send your answers and your own questions to "Ask the readers" at the usual address or email: [editor@disabilitynow.org.uk](mailto:editor@disabilitynow.org.uk)



## SIMON SAYS

Relationships are about compromise, but the rules of your partnership can change over time

My husband was in a car accident two years ago and sustained a brain injury. Before the accident we didn't really have a sex life and this was fine for both of us because we had a strong bond. However, since the accident, he has become more sexual. Although I love him very much, I don't really enjoy this part of our relationship. He is far too aggressive. Any advice?

Norma

A brain and head injury can be very challenging. You don't say how old you are or how long you have been together, but it would seem that you had a sexual arrangement that worked for you both.

However, did you discuss this in any depth? Were you both equally happy with it?

Most people would consider sexuality an important part of a loving relationship. There are other

kinds of partnerships, but let's be frank, most are one-sided rather than mutual. One partner accepts less or no sex because they love their partner so much and don't want to upset or lose them.

Some types of brain injury can mean that people lose their inhibitions. Equally, there can be an underlying

**'It may be that your husband loved you enough to suppress his sexual desire for you'**

depression that can affect a person's relationships.

It may be that your husband loved you enough to suppress his sexual desire for you. His head injury may have impaired his ability to hold back and now he cannot help acting on his feelings.

It may be caused by a combination of physical and psychological reasons. This does not make it any easier for

you, especially as you describe him as "aggressive" sexually.

Your best option is to seek some specialised couple counselling, where he could learn to moderate his behaviour whilst you explore why you never felt comfortable with a sexual relationship.

A head injury can alter much of who a person is and how they relate to the world. It is emotionally stressful for both partners to come to terms with its impact.

It will take time and major changes for you to re-establish your bond as a couple, and you may not be the same couple that you were. Sadly, it may result in your relationship coming to an end.

Whatever the outcome, do not let others pressure you both into making choices which do not suit you. You must do what is best for both your partner and yourself.

● *The Brain Injury Association*, tel: 0808 800 2244 or visit: [www.headway.org.uk](http://www.headway.org.uk)

Send your relationship questions to "Simon says" at the usual postal address or email: [editor@disabilitynow.org.uk](mailto:editor@disabilitynow.org.uk)

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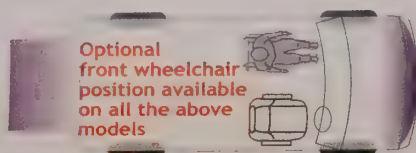


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## What's On

**The Mental Health Today Conference** is coming to the Business Design Centre in Islington, 1 November, 9.30-4.30. £20/£25; tel: 0870 890 1080.

**The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities** is holding a one-day conference on 21 November on the issues around fatherhood for men with learning

disabilities – Recognising Fathers – at the Mermaid Conference Centre in London. Tel: 020 7803 1159, [www.learningdisabilities.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk)

**The Disability Rights Commission** is offering disabled people the chance to learn more about the Disability Equality Duty, before it comes into

force, and existing rights under the Disability Discrimination Act, in three information sessions in Scotland this month. 14 November – the Cairndale Hotel, Dumfries, 24 November – the St Francis Centre, Glasgow, 29 November – The Patio Hotel, Aberdeen. To book a place tel: 0131 527 4000, email: [dedscotland@drc-gb.org](mailto:dedscotland@drc-gb.org)

Two PNG-sponsored **Mobility Access Roadshows**, showcasing equipment and support available to disabled people, will be taking place in Waltham Cross, 11 November, and Enfield, 18 November, with free admission. Tel: 01992503129.

**The Centre for Accessible Environments** is offering a programme of workshops to

promote dialogue for more accessible and inclusive built environments, held in the new CAE access lab in London. 22 November – Building Schools for the Future and Inclusion. 30 November – Shared Space, Shared Surface and Inclusive Design. £40 for a two-hour workshop, tel: 020 7840 0125, [pontus.westerberg@cae.org.uk](mailto:pontus.westerberg@cae.org.uk)

## Publications

*Walking on Wheels-50 Wheel-friendly Trails in Scotland*, by Eva McCracken has been published by the Cualann Press, and lists information on accessible trails in the Scottish countryside. £10.99, tel: 01383 733 724 [www.cualann-scottish-books.co.uk](http://www.cualann-scottish-books.co.uk)

*Easy Miles: No Steps, No Stiles*, written by John Barwise and Harriet Sharkey includes similar information for walkers in the Lake District, suitable for wheelchair-users, or people with mobility problems. Tel: 01625 531035, [www.sigmamapress.co.uk](http://www.sigmamapress.co.uk)

**Epilepsy Action** has published a booklet on Women and Epilepsy, looking at the complex issues around contraception, fertility and the menopause whilst taking anti-epileptic medication. Tel: 0808 800 5050, [www.epilepsy.org.uk/downloads](http://www.epilepsy.org.uk/downloads)

Tactile and large-print maps of the London Underground are now available free to blind and partially sighted passengers, complementing the online station descriptions at [www.describe-online.com](http://www.describe-online.com). Tel: 0845 330 9880 for a free copy of the map.

## Services

**Arthritis Care** and **Directory Enquiries** have launched an Access Information Line for disabled people who may not have access to the internet, from wheelchair users and people with sensory impairments, even to parents with pushchairs. Tel: 0870 162 0162, or visit the website at [www.arthritiscare.org.uk](http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk)

A 24-hour helpline for Gulf-Iraq-Afghanistan war veterans is now running, to help soldier and their families come to terms with the physical and psychological problems they may have. Tel: 0845 257 4853.

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**CHAIRMAN CITROEN DISPATCH 1.9D** Y reg, 74k miles, fsh, pas, full Gowrings conversion incl ramp, electric inertia belts and winch. MOT June 2007. £5,000 ono. Tel: 01461 800309 (Southern Scotland).

**BLACK 2ND HAND** Woodstar all terrain vehicle, used by C5/6 tetraplegic. Very good condition. £12,000 ono. Tel: 01686 650 798 (Newtown, Mid Wales) or email: [DanGJ@supanet.com](mailto:DanGJ@supanet.com)

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Cont'd see pg 47

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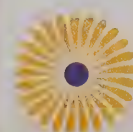
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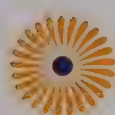
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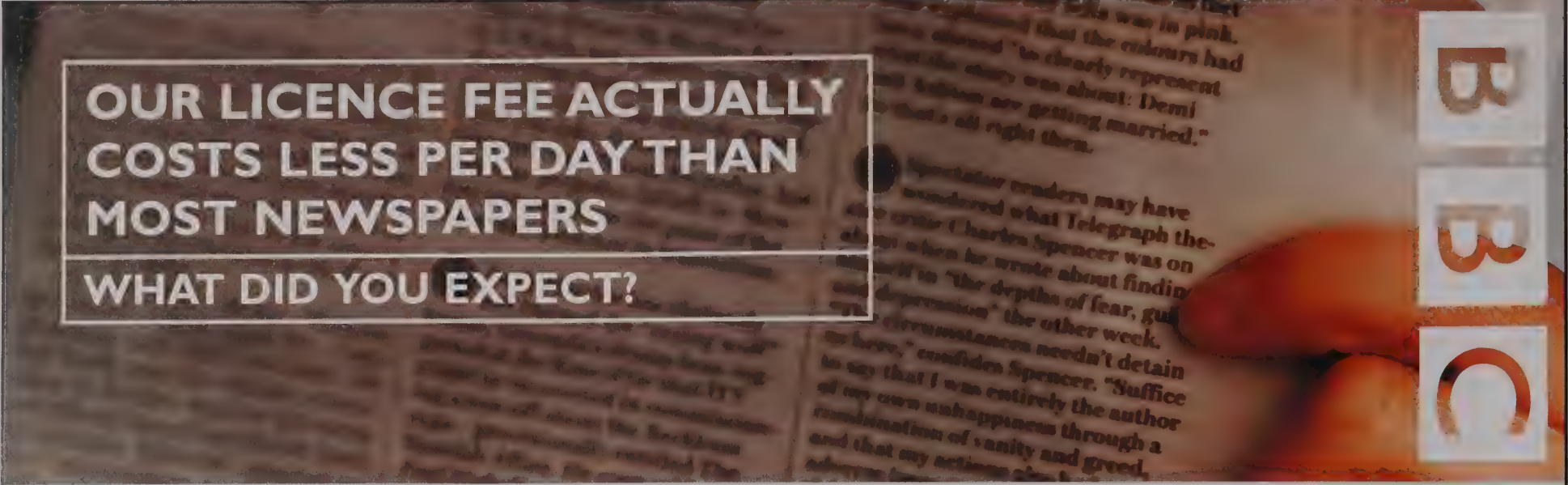
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**Closing date for the receipt of completed questionnaires: 30 November 2006.**

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 For help with completing the questionnaire please call Mary-Anne Rankin on 07717 221 490

 To request a paper copy call Linda Monks on 020 7089 2800

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**PEUGEOT BOXER SWB 1.9 LTR DIESEL** Date first registered: 13/04/1999, White, 5 seater, 2 owners, Good condition, 5 Speed manual, 98,000 miles, MOT until 29/08/2007, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Non-Slip Flooring, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Short wheelbase, Side load door, Soft cord trimmed interior, Twin front passenger seat, Two rear saloon passenger seats. **£4,250 plus VAT**

**VOLKSWAGEN LT 35 LWB 2.8 TDI 158** Date first registered: 01/09/2005, White, 12 seater, 1 owner, As new, Manual, 16,000 miles, A.B.S., Balance of manufacturer's Warranty, Could take 4 wheelchairs, Immaculate condition inside and out, LWB High Roof, Unwin Innotrax floor, Non-Slip Flooring, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, RICON CLEARWAY electric wheelchair lift, Side load door, Twin front passenger seat. **£28,995 plus VAT**

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**FIAT SCUDO COMBI MONTANA 2.0 JTD** Date registered: 05/04/03, Blue, 3 seats, 5 speed manual, 30,000 miles, 5 door, Air conditioning, Electric Mirrors, Electric reels, Electric windows, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, One rear saloon seat, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Remote Central Locking, Service History, Twin Side Doors. **£9,995**

**RENAULT TRAFIC SWB 1.9 DCI 100 TURBO DIESEL** Date first registered: 05/12/03, Blue, 5 seats, 1 owner, Good Condition throughout, 6 speed manual, 29,000 miles, MOT until: 06/06/07, Air Bag, Could take 2 wheelchairs, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, One quick release removable rear seat, Power Steering, Radio/single CD player, Remote Central Locking, Service History, Short wheelbase, Side load door, Single front passenger seat, Two rear saloon passenger seats. **£11,500**

**PEUGEOT BOXER SWB 1.9 LTR DIESEL** Date first registered: 13/04/1999, White, 5 seats, 2 owners, Good condition, 5 Speed manual, 98,000 miles, MOT until: 30/09/2006, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Non-Slip Flooring, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Short wheelbase, Side load door, Soft cord trimmed interior, Twin front passenger seat, Two rear saloon passenger seats. **£5,250**

**KIA SEDONA 2.9 LTR TURBO DIESEL** Date first registered: 03/12/02, Metallic green, 4 seats, Excellent Condition, 5 speed manual, Mileage: 18,000 miles, 5 door, A.B.S., Air Bag, Air conditioning, Electric Mirrors, Electric reels, Electric windows, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Rear Saloon Heating/Cooling System, Remote Central Locking, Two rear saloon passenger seats. **£13,950**

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### • Holidays

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2 newly converted barns on small family farm. Fully wheelchair accessible. Ensuite bedrooms. Sleeps up to 6. For details contact Esme Eyles 01726 883240 or www.treworgansfarm.co.uk

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Cont'd see pg 48



• Info Day

scope

Foot Anstey  
SOLICITORS

## Medico-Legal Information Day

**Saturday 9th December 2006**

Foot Anstey office, Derry's Cross, Plymouth  
09:30-12:30

Foot Anstey, in association with the Scope Inclusion Team, will be holding an advice and information day on clinical negligence, education disputes, 'best interest' issues and the role of the Court of Protection.

The day is aimed at disabled adults, parents of disabled children and professionals who would like free advice and information.

Our speakers will include:

- Mr Michael Powers QC, editor of Powers & Harris, Clinical Negligence.
- Denzil Lush, Master of the Court of Protection
- Andrew Mullen, Head of Service, Scope Inclusion
- Robert Antrobus, clinical negligence solicitor at Foot Anstey Solicitors
- Katja Robins, solicitor at Foot Anstey Solicitors

Entry will be free of charge. Disability accessible venue. Limited parking will be available. Free tea and coffee. There will be limited crèche facilities available.

To confirm your attendance please contact Jessica Harries at Foot Anstey Solicitors  
t: 01392 685343 e: [jessica.harries@foot-ansteys.co.uk](mailto:jessica.harries@foot-ansteys.co.uk)

[info@foot-ansteys.co.uk](mailto:info@foot-ansteys.co.uk)  
[www.foot-ansteys.co.uk](http://www.foot-ansteys.co.uk)

legal solutions for life

• Recruitment (on page 48 to 50)

# CandoCo

## Artistic Director

CandoCo has a formidable reputation as a world leader in its field and has influenced dance practice to an unprecedented degree. Working with disabled and non-disabled dancers, the Company has challenged and engaged audiences worldwide through its ambitious commissions and the high quality of its performance and education work.

After 16 years, founding Director Celeste Dandeker will retire in 2007. The Board now wishes to appoint her successor to continue her pioneering and inspirational work and to maintain the excellence of the Company's work.

The Board seeks an exceptional and experienced individual. Applicants with either direct experience or the potential to fulfil this role are encouraged to apply. The recruitment process will recognise the value of transferable skills from applicants with a strong track record as dancers, producers or choreographers who have demonstrated leadership potential in this field.

**Deadline: 27 November 2006**

Further information: [verity@candoco.co.uk](mailto:verity@candoco.co.uk) or T: 020 7704 6845 or [www.candoco.co.uk](http://www.candoco.co.uk)

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DFID is an equal opportunities employer and selection is on merit. Applications are welcomed from all parts of the community and we actively encourage interest from women, ethnic minority groups and those with a disability. We will make any reasonable adjustments should they be required. Candidates should be UK Nationals, nationals of a member state of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth citizens with the right to work in the UK.

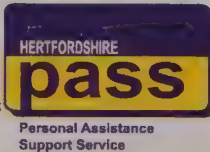
You can find out more about us, and our work, on our website [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk). You'll also find information about specific vacancies, opportunities, and an electronic application on the site.



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## Employment Facilitator

To work with learning and / or physically disabled young students to find work experience placements for them.

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**£23,000 p.a salary.** Full time. 3-year contract initially

Deadline for applications: 5pm 10th November. Interviews: 30th November

For an information pack contact:  
Fung Kennedy telephone 01707 321 442  
or email: [admin@hertspass.com](mailto:admin@hertspass.com)



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**PEUGEOT 806 SRDT** (Diesel) with Constables Car chair system — front passenger side. One owner. Bought new in October 1996. CD Player (holds 12 CDs). Air conditioner, manual, 103k miles. Blue metallic colour. Only one owner from new, fsh and full MOT. £2,775. Tel: 020 8350 9881 (Enfield, Middlesex) or mobile: 07946 522143.

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**CHAIRMAN CITROEN DISPATCH** 1.9D with Gowrings conversion, X reg, fsh, 15k miles, blue, MOT May '07. £7,500. Tel: 0121 744 7096 (Solihull, West Midlands).

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**2002 51 REG** Toyota Hiace 2.4D (Lewis Reed), Metallic Green, 45k miles, 3 seats – rear seat can be fitted either way, fixed wheelchair position, FSH, MOT, One owner, Towbar and Roof Rack – £8,000. Tel day: 0131 523 3081 or eve: 01506 845252 or email: [ianbdouglas@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ianbdouglas@blueyonder.co.uk)

**14 SEATER MINIBUS** 2.0 (Renault Master T35), blue, H reg, pas. RICON rear lift with tracking. Regularly serviced and only 8,500 miles. 8 months' MOT, £895 ono. Tel: 01223 424720 (Cambridge) or 07913 807032 or email: [redmond@easy.com](mailto:redmond@easy.com)

**FORD TRANSIT 2.5L** turbo deisel, single wheel base, semi high top, automatic, 8 mths MOT, N reg, 65k miles, met blue, one owner, fully adapted for disabled driver, tinted windows all around, 2 seats plus driver, FSH (including for adaptations). Adaptations: Hydraulic rear lift and doors (remote control), wheelchair or scooter locking in back, electric slide back and rotating seat, hand controls, push button ignition and more. must be seen, £4,000ono. Tel: 07980 989236 (Reading) or email: [davidlambley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:davidlambley@hotmail.co.uk)

### Bicycles/Tricycles

**ADULT TRICYCLE PASHLEY** Picador, large rear shopping box. Vgc, £250. Tel: 020 8546 2745 (Kingston).

### Household & Families

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**PRESTIGE MOBILITY SCOOTER** "Ultra light", max speed 4 mph. With basket. Hardly used, still under warranty. Cost £900, asking £480 ono. Tel: 020 8311 9135 (Thamesmead).\

**ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR, BALDER** 'finesse', top of the range, joystick control,electrical adjusting height/ backrest/individual footrest/tilt and speed functions, ex condition, £500ono for quick sale. Tel: 07980 989236 (Reading) or email: [davidlambley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:davidlambley@hotmail.co.uk)

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Cont'd see pg 49



• Recruitment (on page 48 to 50)

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PCSOs walk the beat creating a visible, reassuring presence on the county's streets. They're people who really care about their community. People who help us to ensure that levels of crime continue to fall. People who make a positive difference. Can you help make that difference?

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Closing date: 10th November 2006

Derbyshire Constabulary is committed to equal opportunities and welcomes applications from suitably qualified people from all sections of the community in an effort to reflect the diversity of the community we serve. As part of this commitment, all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for any police staff post will be invited to interview.

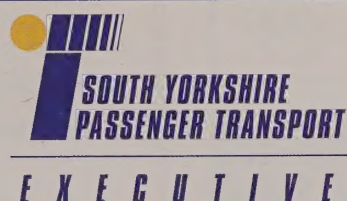


**JAZZY PRIDE 1400** wheelchair (2001) with Recaro seat. In very good condition with brand new batteries. £1,050. Email: davidlloyd55@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 07976 282590.

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**GRANVILLE CLOSE, FAVERSHAM, Kent.** Disabled friendly, 3 Bedroom, end of terrace, vertical wheelchair lift. Integral garage with automatic doors. Front door intercom access, all double glazed windows and doors. House alarm, downstairs cloakroom, warm air heating system. Front and rear garden with a lawn, shrubs, apple tree and fir tree. The local supermarket is five minutes walk, and the town centre is 15 minutes. There are wheelchair accessible pavements all the way to the town centre. Price: £205,000. To view this property, please call Laurence or Rachel on 020 7243 1646 or email: Rachel@ukfg.org.uk



## COMMITTED TO EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

Working in partnership with the four South Yorkshire District Councils of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, local public transport operators and many South Yorkshire organisations, the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive is responsible for securing and promoting the best possible public transport network for the South Yorkshire community.

Through our commitment to providing equal opportunities we intend to be an organisation that embraces and encourages diversity and is positive about employing disabled people.

All vacancies are advertised on our website at: [www.sypte.co.uk](http://www.sypte.co.uk) and within local newspapers, alternatively you can call the Human Resources Department on **0114 2211218** for information.

Benefits include a flexible working hours scheme, 26 days holiday per year, a company final salary based pension scheme and a free countywide TravelMaster providing unlimited bus, tram and rail travel throughout South Yorkshire.



The Transport Executive is striving to become an exemplar Equality and Diversity Employer



## Community Development Officer

Salary: £22,472 - £27,981

Catalyst Communities Housing Association manages more than 10,000 rented, leasehold and special needs homes in West London and the South East.

Part of the Catalyst Housing Group, providing over 15,000 homes in London and the South East.

We are an equal opportunities employer committed to diversity

A charitable housing association

We are looking for an excellent organiser with a confident, outgoing personality who can work with residents to enable them to set up community development and regeneration activities and projects. You will need to be able to engage with both the young and old, and have the skills and understanding required to work with people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

As well as having experience of working with resident or community groups, you will have an understanding of the role of housing associations in regeneration and partnership working. Excellent verbal and written communication skills are also key to this role.

For more information about this role please visit our website at [www.chg.org.uk/careers](http://www.chg.org.uk/careers) or email your address for an application pack to [recruitment@chg.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@chg.org.uk)



**Catalyst Housing Group**

## • Study Day



## COMMUNICATION THERAPY INTERNATIONAL STUDY DAY

### Disability Training in Developing Countries – Being Culturally Relevant

11th November 2006 10am-4pm at  
Institute of Child Health, 30 Guilford St, London, WC1N 1EH

This study day will explore planning and delivery of training in disability in developing countries with particular emphasis on cultural issues.

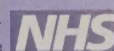
**CTI Members £10, Non Members £15; Students £5**

Lunch and tea/coffee will be provided

For more information, please contact Linda Whitworth on **01484 605507** or email: [ctimembership@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ctimembership@yahoo.co.uk)

## • Services

ROYAL DEVON & EXETER NHS FOUNDATION TRUST  
Mardon Neuro-Rehabilitation Centre



## MARDON NEURO REHABILITATION CENTRE

Wonford Road, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4UD. Tel: 01392 208580/2 Fax: 01392 662929  
email: [www.Joan.Collcott@rdehc-tr.swest.nhs.uk](mailto:www.Joan.Collcott@rdehc-tr.swest.nhs.uk)

Mardon specialises in neurological rehabilitation assessments and treatment programmes for people with neurological conditions and brain injuries. The centre provides a consultant-led, multidisciplinary team that offers a wide range of health services for individuals with neurological conditions. The team also work closely with families and carers. Mardon promotes health improvements relevant to individuals over the age of 16 years and works with other agencies to help facilitate re-integration into the community.

Out of area referrals, legal and insurance work welcome. Brochure is available upon request.



## BIRKDALE PAEDIATRIC & ADULT NEURO CLINIC

Advice and treatment from newborn babies to adults. A wide range of conditions treated, some of these include movement, posture, balance, walking, coordination, hand-function and learning difficulties.

Specialise in cerebral palsy and neurological conditions.  
Farshideh Bondarenko DIP PHYSIO MCSP SRP.

**web: [www.neuro-physio.co.uk](http://www.neuro-physio.co.uk) tel: 0208 998 9403**

## DEADLINE

**DN Extra November 2006 published 11 November. Classified deadlines: Booking and copy: 1 November.**

**Disability Now December 2006 published 25 November.**

**Classified deadlines: Booking: 10 November. Copy: 14 November.**



**scope**About cerebral palsy.  
For disabled people achieving equality.

Time to get equal

**DN**  
disabilitynow

## Ensure disability rights hits the headlines

**Editor, Disability Now and DNOnline** ([www.disabilitynow.org.uk](http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk))**£45K (plus inner London weighting)**

Scope's mission is to drive the change to make our society the first where disabled people achieve equality – a society where disabled people are valued and have the same human rights as others.

Scope needs a dynamic editor to direct its national campaigning publication *Disability Now* (DN). Because DN and DNOnline reach more than 80,000 disabled people, campaigners and policymakers, you should possess strong leadership skills and a strategic mind. You should also be extremely media savvy, with a hunger for breaking agenda-setting exclusives. As a disabled person, you should be able to demonstrate a knowledge of disability rights and have a passion for equality.

You will lead the lively and talented team that produces the country's most talked-about disability publication, leading debate in the corridors of power and among key opinion formers and media figures.

One day you might plan a new campaign with a major politician, the next comment on a key disability issue, while ensuring that DN continues to give a voice to disabled people across the UK.

**This post is reserved for a disabled person with a recognised impairment, condition or long-term limiting illness.**

For application packs, email: [ivy.broadhead@scope.org.uk](mailto:ivy.broadhead@scope.org.uk), tel: 020 7619 7323 or write to: Ivy Broadhead, Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW – stating your preferred format for a pack. For more information, visit: [www.scope.org.uk/jobs](http://www.scope.org.uk/jobs)

**Closing date for completed applications: Monday, 20 November 2006.**

Scope is a registered charity, no 208231.



## scope employment service

**Are you disabled?**

**Are you claiming incapacity benefit or job seeker allowance?**

**Do you want to secure a permanent job with a minimum 16 hours per week?**

If you have said yes to the three questions above then we can probably help you.

**Scope's Employment Service** is part of **SCOPE**, the national charity. As a provider of WORKSTEP, a government sponsored programme designed to assist disabled people in entering the workplace we can provide you with support in finding a suitable job; furthermore, that support will continue, should you require it, when you are employed. At no cost to you at any stage.

The employers we work with represent large corporations, public sector organisations and local businesses. There are currently a number of vacancies nationwide for a range of different jobs, in a number of different industries, for example:

- Customer advisors in DIY retail
- HO and store vacancies with a national charity
- Administrative posts in central government
- Retail jobs in a large supermarket chain
- Call centre jobs in financial services and telecommunications

Given the span of vacancies the employers we work with have, we are looking for a range of experiences and skills in the people registering on our job seeker database.

Interested? Please send your CV. You can:

- **Email:** [employment.support@scope.org.uk](mailto:employment.support@scope.org.uk)
- **Write:** Scope's Employment Service, Suite 1A, Kings Hall, St Ives Business Park, Parsons Green, St Ives PE27 4WY
- **Call:** Kirsty Barton on 01480 309619

Once we have received your CV we will contact you if we need to check any information. We will then enter your details on our database, regularly check for suitable positions. Once we have identified a potential job, one of our Employment Officers will help you prepare for the interview, and provide you with the advice and support you may need.

We look forward to hearing from you.

**For disabled people achieving equality**

**LONDON BUBBLE****The London Bubble Theatre Company seeks TRUSTEES**

London Bubble Theatre Company is a well-established company that makes theatre with, and for, its community in London. The work includes an innovative education programme, wide-ranging participatory activities and professional projects that tour to parks, woods, houses and theatres across London.

The London Bubble Board of Trustees seeks to attract expertise in the fields of education, marketing (particularly press and media), finance, youth and sponsorship. Like most boards ours does not fully reflect the community with which we are engaging. We particularly wish to encourage applicants from sectors that are under-represented within our industry and city.

In the first instance we ask for a letter of application plus CV with references.

Please visit [www.londonbubble.org.uk/jobs](http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/jobs) for more information on the company and further details about this recruitment opportunity.

Closing date for applications is **Monday 20th November**.

London Bubble positively encourages applications from people with disabilities and ethnic minorities. The company is a revenue-funded client of Arts Council of England, Association of London Government and London Borough of Southwark.

[www.londonbubble.org.uk](http://www.londonbubble.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 264359



## Project Manager

**30 hours per week for the first 6 months. This will reduce to 18.5 hours unless additional funding is attained.**

**Contract will initially be up to 30th October 2009.**

**Salary: £25,435 pro rata**

Poole Rights Organisation on Disability requires an innovative Manager who will be responsible for the management of the Direct Payments Support Services Team in Poole, Dorset.

You will have a thorough knowledge of disability issues, financial management and an understanding of the Direct Payments Scheme. An NVQ level 4 in management or equivalent is desirable. As well as successfully managing the Direct Payment Scheme, you will be required to:

- Drive PRO Disability forward to become a Centre of Independent Living.
- Seek and obtain funding in order to expand our service.

PRO Disability is committed to providing equal opportunities. We welcome applications from people with disabilities. The ability to travel is essential.

**Closing date for application: 8th December 2006.**

For further information, contact Kelvin Trevett on **01202-723301**, or email [kelvin.trevett@prodisability.org.uk](mailto:kelvin.trevett@prodisability.org.uk)



## NORTHWOOD NURSING & CARE SERVICES LTD.

CARER required for three or four days a week 10am to 5pm for physically challenged woman. Previous experience, and driving licence essential. Applicant must consent to "police check".

**Tel: 01923 828902 office hours.**



## GRIMM NIGHTS &amp; EVERAFTER DAYS



**A**s the season changes and our minds turn to the festive season, Chickenshed is offering a family of four tickets (worth £58) for Grimm Nights & Everafter Days. They are for the Saturday 2 December show at 7.30pm.

With Chickenshed's array of music and dance, this promises to be an exciting and original Christmas production. When Hansel and Gretel are left in the forest to fend for themselves, a series of events take the two children on a journey through some of the Brother's Grimms' best-loved tales.

All performances will be audio-described with touch tours available. Performances will also be captioned and sign language interpreted.

For your chance to win just tick "tickets" on the entry form and return it to our freepost address.

For more information, go to: [www.chickenshed.org.uk](http://www.chickenshed.org.uk) or call: 020 8292 9222, minicom: 020 8350 0676.



## LAST MONTH'S WINNERS

The winner of the Memory Foam Mattress in the September issue was Mrs E. C Howson from Halifax.

The winners of the Foot Recovery Cream were Mrs Thompson from Newcastle Upon Tyne, Mrs M Abel from Southampton, Mrs Margaret Callaghan from Essex, Mr D Mackay-Morris from Wiltshire and Mr Yogeshkumar Patel from Middlesex.

## DN next month

All the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 25 November



## CAMERON AS CARER

Conservative leader David Cameron talks exclusively to DN's Elizabeth Choppin on his life as a carer, services for disabled children and their families, special schools and what life might be like for disabled people under a Tory government.



## A CRACKING CHRISTMAS

DN tells you all you need to know for an accessible, affordable festive season.

## KEEP WARM WITH A HEATED GILET



For more information on Blazewear's range of products email at [info@blazewear.com](mailto:info@blazewear.com) or visit the website at [www.blazewear.com](http://www.blazewear.com)

**T**o keep warm this winter, Blazewear is giving away a heated gilet to one lucky DN reader, worth £50-£55 plus VAT.

The gilet is fleece lined and waterproof and features a microchip heat control battery with 5 heat settings with 3-hour charge time.

Its heat settings range from between 40 and 70°C but has the added advantage of not being bulky. The gilet is a perfect accessory as the winter months set in.

For your chance to win one, just tick "gilet" on the entry form.

For more



## to enter

Tick the competition circle below, add your details, and send for FREE to Disability Now, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or email the details to: [suzan.hillman@scope.org.uk](mailto:suzan.hillman@scope.org.uk)

Tickets ☐

Gilet ☐



## terms &amp; conditions

Closing date for entrants: 17.11.06 • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in DN • In association with Chickenshed Theatre Trust and Blazewear Ltd. We may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your details to be included ☐ Please cut around the edges.

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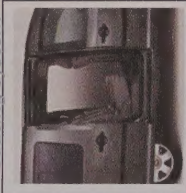
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  - 12 degree ramp angle

Flexi-seat®  
seating system



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[www.lewisreedgroup.co.uk](http://www.lewisreedgroup.co.uk)



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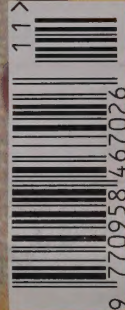
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£1.80 November 2006

# News hound

Guest editor  
Bert Massie sinks  
his teeth into *DN*



The campaigning newspaper that puts you in the picture

Jobs DN IS LOOKING FOR A NEW EDITOR. SEE PAGE 50